(Re)shaping the South Bank
The (post) politics of sustainable place making

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(Re)shaping the South Bank: The (post) politics of sustainable place-making

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Abstract

While the private sector has long been in the vanguard of shaping and managing urban environs, under the New Labour government business actors were also heralded as key agents in the delivery of *sustainable places*. Policy interventions, such as *Business Improvement Districts* (BIDs), saw business-led local partnerships positioned as key drivers in the production of economically, socially and environmentally sustainable urban communities. This research considers how one business-led body, *South Bank Employer's Group* (SBEG), has inserted itself into, and influenced, local (re)development trajectories. Interview, observational and archival data are used to explore how, in a neighbourhood noted for its turbulent and conflictual development past, SBEG has led on a series of regeneration programmes that it asserts will create a "better South Bank for all".

A belief in consensual solutions underscored New Labour's urban agenda and cast regeneration as a politically neutral process in which different stakeholders can reach mutually beneficial solutions (Southern, 2001). For authors such as Mouffe (2005), the search for consensus represents a move towards a 'post-political' approach to governing in which the (necessarily) antagonistic nature of the political is denied. The research utilises writings on the 'post-political' condition to frame an empirical exploration of regeneration at the neighbourhood level. It shows how SBEG has brokered a consensual vision of regeneration with the aim of overriding past disagreements about local development. While this may be seen as an attempt to enact what Honig (1993: 3) calls the 'erasure of resistance from political orderings' by assuming control of regeneration agendas (see also Baeten, 2009), the research shows that 'resistances' to SBEG's activities continue to be expressed in a series of ways. These resistances suggest that, while increasingly 'post-political' in character, local place shaping continues to evidence what Massey (2005: 10) calls the 'space of loose ends and missing links' from which political activity can, at least potentially, emerge.

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Introduction: (Re)shaping the South Bank

> We will work in partnership with business to create the dynamic economy, the competitive economy of the future...one that can meet the challenges of an entirely new century and new age (Blair, 1997: no page).

This statement, part of Tony Blair's Prime Ministerial acceptance speech following New Labour's landslide election victory in 1997, captures much of the former government's approach to urban policy and governance. In this, and similar pronouncements about modernity, globalisation and economic growth, made throughout his leadership of New Labour, Blair made clear his belief that public-private partnerships represented the best way to ensure the business of government kept pace with the demands of the 21st century. New Labour's promotion of a partnership approach in the delivery of public services, in planning and local economic development, and in the formation of new systems of urban governance, also incorporated the values of a more entrepreneurial or *generative* style of politics, 'which seeks to allow individuals and groups to *make things happen*, rather than have things happen to them' (Giddens, 1994a: 15).

During 13 years of government, New Labour instigated a series of governance reforms designed to mobilise this vision of a new, more responsive and *flexible* politics which, it was hoped, would reengage the electorate in matters of democracy. However, despite the former government's mania for 'newness', many of the initiatives and priorities of previous Conservative governments, not least their pro-partnership stance, were retained. In relation to urban policy, programmes, such as the Major government's *Single Regeneration Budget* (SRB), were expanded to facilitate the creation of local regeneration partnerships. Following its re-election in 2003, New Labour launched the *Sustainable Communities Plan*, hereafter the SCs Plan (ODPM, 2003). An over-arching agenda for planning, economic development, local governance reforms, regeneration, the environment and housing, the SCs Plan further enshrined cross-sector partnership working as the optimum way to deliver, manage and govern environmentally, socially and economically sustainable communities. The SCs Plan was complimented by a parallel agenda known as *place-shaping* which, in requiring local authorities to work collaboratively with non-governmental actors such as businesses in the (re)development of local places, represented an attempt to establish a more coordinated and consensus-based approach to planning (Shaw and Lord, 2009).

These policy doctrines, at least ostensibly, heralded the arrival of new more collaborative and community-focussed modes of urban governance 'based on engaging local people in

partnerships for change with strong local leadership' (ODPM, 2000: no page). However, far from seeing these developments as part of a 'roll-back' of central government control, scholars have argued that, instead, the partnership agenda can be 'viewed as a further dispersal and penetration of state power,' and a means to constitute 'legitimate subject[s]' to share in public policy-making and delivery' (Newman, 2001: 125). Others make similar observations, suggesting that while New Labour made overtures towards the ideals of democratic participation and *discursive democracy* - often rolled into debates about localism – such agendas, in fact, involve the state delegating governance powers to representatives who then control and supervise the 'experts' who formulate and administer policies (Levi-Faur, 2005, see also, Braithwaite, 2005).

Private-sector actors represent one such group, engaged in what Levi-Faur (2005) refers to as a system of *regulatory governance.* Here the role of the state is not weakened, but rather is recast as part of a new division of labour between the state and society. Thus, under New Labour, businesses were encouraged, through policy frameworks such as *Business Improvement Districts* (BIDs), to take on a greater role in urban regeneration and place-management in matters of local governance. Justice and Skelcher (2009: 738) term this a form of *third-party government* in which the state does not withdraw but rather, 'acts through intermediary organizations, such as not-for-profits, businesses and community associations, to deliver public purpose'. It is by focussing on the private sector stake, and modes of engagement in, these activities, that the thesis investigates three interlinked themes; the geographies of local economic development, the mechanisms by which interests in urban politics are identified and mobilised, and how processes of localism and devolved governance powers play out at the neighbourhood scale.

The interrogation of state-business relations in matters of urban governance is a project that has long preoccupied scholars, and the thesis builds upon these literatures as part of the over-arching aim of the research; to describe, and critically assess, the private sector role in urban regeneration. This aim is facilitated by the use of empirical data derived from in-depth case study research conducted in and around the South Bank, a central London neighbourhood that has undergone significant regeneration in recent years. In order to advance understanding of the business role in urban development, planning and politics, five interlinked research objectives were developed:

- To describe the inter-organisational networks involved in processes of contemporary local economic development and urban regeneration
- To identify private sector actors' interests in local area regeneration, and to critically consider how these interests are brought together and mobilised
- To explore the forms that private sector involvement in local development takes, and to make links to the national and regional policy context in describing these forms
- To explain and critically evaluate policy-making processes in relation to regeneration, local development and planning
- To critically assess, by recourse to empirical example, claims that New Labour's Third Way politics represent the emergence of 'post-political' style of governing.

While the urban politics and geography literature has shed significant conceptual and empirical light on all of these objectives, the need for further research into these issues remains. This is particularly so given that, as Harding et al (2000: 975-6) point out, 'there have been relatively few studies which demonstrate, empirically, how private-sector involvement in, and influence over, urban governance is manifested and with what effect'. This is not to deny the wealth of literature that has critically considered the role of business-led bodies in local politics (see chapter 2). However, it is to suggest that, with the exception of work by authors such as Cook (2008, 2009, 2010), Justice and Skelcher (2009), Raco (2003a) and Ward (2007), there have been relatively few *recent and in-depth* empirical studies addressing the private sector role in UK regeneration. This is surprising given New Labour's contention, expressed in a range of policy measures, that in order to achieve long-lasting urban regeneration, engaging businesses was of central, critical importance. In reflecting on the grounded effects of such policy frameworks in a particular place, the thesis sheds light on the relative strengths and weaknesses of the former government's attempts to engage, work with, and devolve governance powers to, business-led groups and other non-governmental bodies.

In assessing the role of private sector-led bodies in local development and regeneration, the research draws upon a range of writings that have critically considered the impact of 'Third Way' thinking – the ideological basis for many of New Labour's reforming projects – on democratic politics. One of the most sharply focussed critiques is offered by Mouffe (2000, 2005) who suggests that contemporary western governments' drive for 'non-conflictual' political solutions to global issues such as climate change forms part of a wider governance project in which the aim is to transcend the 'old', 'adversarial', politics of left

and right. Indeed, one of the central figures in the development of the Third Way politics, Anthony Giddens, has suggested that, forging a new, progressive politics 'beyond left and right' is an urgent political project given the failures of old-style socialism and the inherently contradictory nature of neoliberalism (Giddens, 1994).

Such a claim is, for Mouffe (2005), a worrying one, in which *politics proper* – which, she argues, must retain an antagonistic dimension - is evacuated. In its place, this 'post-political approach', which embraces notions such as 'partisan free democracy' and 'global civil society', envisages creating a world ''beyond left and right', 'beyond hegemony', 'beyond sovereignty' and 'beyond antagonism'' (Mouffe, 2005: 2). This political project is, Mouffe contends, not only conceptually flawed, since it is based upon an 'idealized view of human sociability', but it is also 'fraught with political dangers' reflecting its insistence that '[v]iolence and hostility are...archaic phenomena, to be eliminated thanks to the progress of exchange and...transparent communication between rational participants' (Mouffe, 2005: 2-3).

Some of Mouffe's fears for the current state of democracy are shared by Honig (1993: 2), who comments on the tendency to confine politics to 'the juridical, administrative, or regulative tasks of stabilizing moral and political subjects, building consensus, maintaining agreements, or consolidating communities and identities'. For Honig (1993: 2), this represents a 'virtue' theory of politics in which the task is to 'resolve institutional questions, to get politics right, over, and done with, to free modern subjects and their sets of arrangements of political conflict and instability'. Honig's sentiments about the dilution of politics are shared others such as Habermas, who warns of the 'classical doctrine of politics' becoming supplanted by a 'technocratic consciousness' in which the avoidance of risk is paramount (in Finlayson, 2005: 5).

New Labour's predilection for the creation of quantitative targets, quotas, and the introduction of efficiency measures such as spending reviews, all conducted under the premise of 'best-value', is one example of this. In relation to urban regeneration, as Southern (2001) suggests, this was manifest in the creation of managerial positions that while ostensibly claiming to increase autonomy at the local level, were then subject to close scrutiny by regional and central government. Much of this reflected New Labour's concern with ensuring cost-efficiency, a managerial trait inherited from past governments, and

which, under New Labour, was melded with other, seemingly contradictory goals, such as enhancing social equality. This, as Southern (2001: 265) notes, resulted in a complex policy landscape that also, importantly for this research, 'laid the basis for a loose consensus about what is 'right' in regeneration'.

One consequence of this is that regeneration has been portrayed by government as a politically neutral space in which 'different groups, with not always consistent agendas [can]...come together for a common purpose' (Southern, 2001: 265). The research supports Southern's (2001) claims, and, furthermore, takes issue with the assumption - implicit in much of New Labour's urban policy agendas - that local terrains represent non-conflictual landscapes in which social groups are equally able to engage with, and shape the contours of, political debate and localised regeneration delivery. The claim made for urban politics, by New Labour, is that institutional plurality has created opportunities for a range of different stakeholders to influence local development debates. This research challenges this claim, and demonstrates that matters of urban governance remain both interest-led and driven, and inherently uneven in nature; with the business voice positioned more favourably relative to other stakeholder groups in communicating its interest agenda.

Many authors have taken a critical stance towards the former government's promotion of partnership working, and in his writings on the redevelopment of the South Bank, Baeten (2000, 2009: 246) has argued that local business-led partnerships are taking advantage of more pluralised governance arrangements to mobilise 'post-political regeneration tactics' and 'singular discourse about what regeneration should be about'. This is a development that Baeten, much like Mouffe, sees as part of the emergence of a 'post-political form of regeneration' (2009: 246). The research builds upon Baeten's (2000, 2009) work, and examines his claims about the post-political nature of local regeneration by recourse to original empirical data. Exploring the meaning of *the political* through localised examples is a core aim of the thesis and reflects the contention that, with a few exceptions, much of the literature concerned with the rise of the post-political is relatively abstract in nature. An argument of the thesis is that without paying due critical attention to matters of *policy*, what Rancière (2000) refers to as the domain of the 'police', broader shifts in the constitution of *the political*, may be obscured.

In exploring these issues empirically, the thesis focuses on a private sector-led body, South Bank Employer's Group, hereafter SBEG, and considers its role in local regeneration. Established by a small group of local employers in 1991, SBEG describes itself as a 'unique partnership of eighteen of the major organisations in South Bank, Waterloo and Blackfriars with a long-term commitment to improving the everyday experience of the area for employees, visitors and residents alike' (SBEG, undated: no page). In emphasising the mutual benefits associated with physical regeneration, SBEG's approach mirrors New Labour's urban agenda.

In making such presuppositions, parallel claims are made, by SBEG, that it has a 'mandate' to act on behalf of a range of local stakeholders whose (multiple) interests, it suggests, can be brought together in a consensual place-based politics to "benefit all". The thesis thus makes a contribution to the study of issues of accountability, consent and legitimacy that, as Justice and Skelcher (2009) suggest, are pertinent issues as the realm of urban governance becomes increasingly open to public-private bodies such as BIDs. For Giddens (1994: 7), the fluidity between categories such as 'public' and 'private' is a key feature of contemporary societies, and has resulted in the expansion of what he calls *social reflexivity*. The result of a dislocation between knowledge and control, social reflexivity refers to a reality in which '[i]nformation produced by specialists...can no longer be wholly confined to specific groups, but becomes routinely interrupted and acted on by lay individuals in the course of their everyday actions' (Giddens, 1994: 24).

One consequence of this is the emergence of hybrid organisational forms that operate across the boundaries between public and private sectors (Rainey, 1997). The research makes a contribution towards the theorisation of organisational forms, and shows that SBEG's relative high level of operational reflexivity has enhanced the group's ability to partake in the 'regeneration game'. For example, SBEG's 'quasi-public' status has enabled it to tap into, and shape, political debates around regeneration and governance that, today, are no longer the preserve of state-led organisations. The thesis thus contributes towards the study of changing state/non-state relations in showing how SBEG, while founded independently by individuals from local business and cultural organisations, emerged within a context characterised by strong political support for partnership-working in planning, regeneration and development. While SBEG is not a product of the state per se, the thesis shows how shifting institutional inter-relationships have provided a space through which

the business agenda (provided it is sufficiently self-organised and resourced) can assume a significant role in local politics.

This suggests that study of the influence exerted by business-led groups in local place shaping is a pressing priority. Indeed, the research shows how the local business agenda has been implicated in what Rancière (2010: 3) has called *le partage du sensible* (the partition of the sensible), 'that system of sensible evidences that reveals both the existence of a communality and the divisions that define in it respectively assigned places and parts'. Rancière's conception of the hierarchical and bounded arrangements in which social activities are embedded also highlights the spatial processes by which the boundaries of debate and action, in matters such as local place shaping, are defined. Mouffe (2005) shows how this has informed an antagonistic 'friend/enemy relation', in which those demanding the discussion of issues deemed 'off the agenda' are seen to pose a threat to the preservation of consensus, and thus silenced by being placed outside of political debates.

While there is growing momentum around the concept of post-politics, there has been little empirical exploration of the localised effects of these processes, a gap which this research contributes towards filling. In chapters 6 and 7, a key focus is to explore the mechanisms by which the silencing Mouffe (2005) refers to occurs; that is, how local interests play a part in constructing a consensual politics of place that flattens the terrain of local debate and, in turn, denies the 'perpetuity of political contest' (Honig, 1993: 3). One example of this political 'flattening' concerns the activities of the South Bank Partnership (SBP). Established by SBEG in 1995 to provide a local governance structure for its agenda that incorporated local councillors, MPs and other non-business actors such as representatives from the Metropolitan Police, the SBP gives SBEG what its members describe as a "democratic mandate" to act on behalf of the wider South Bank community.

The conviction that the activities of the group are in the interest of, and will benefit, equally, the community at large, is, for Honig (1993: 5), representative of widely-held assumption that 'political orders express and fit the selves and communities for whom they are designed'. The danger in adopting this viewpoint, Honig (1993: 4) argues, is that in claiming that 'accounts of subjectivity fit the self without excess, they also exhibit an undemocratic insensitivity to the remainders of their politics...The other is then dehumanized, criminalized, or ostracized by an (otherwise inclusive) political community'

(see also, Baeten, 2009, Mouffe, 2005, Swyngedouw, 2007a, 2007b, 2009a, 2009b, Žižek, 2009). The thesis shows that there is evidence of similar processes at work in the South Bank, whereby residents who have resisted a SBEG-brokered consensual regeneration vision, have been placed outside of governance mechanisms such as the SBP.

The remainder of the thesis is structured as follows. Chapter 1 presents an overview of the conceptual underpinnings of the *Third Way*, a set of political ideas that influenced the values and approach to government adopted during the 13 years of New Labour rule, and underpinned many of the party's reformist agendas. The chapter offers an analysis of three, inter-related, elements of Blair's modernising political project that sought to, 1. Instigate widespread welfare service reforms; 2. Revitalise democratic politics through increased citizenship engagement and political devolution; and 3. Undertake processes of local state restructuring. The chapter shows how these reformist agendas were underpinned by a range of ideologies including populism, communitarianism and pragmatism. The effects of New Labour's modernising projects at the local level are revisited later in the thesis, and the research shows how they resonate with SBEG's own operational aims, goals and functions. The chapter also develops the argument that New Labour embraced a 'post-political' style of governing through a review of critical writings by a range of authors. This review is conducted in the manner of a sympathetic critique, whereby a series of questions and observations about the strengths and limitations of this literature, such as its ability to explain processes including local economic and political changes, are put forward.

In chapter 2, the focus turns towards New Labour's urban policy and regeneration agenda. The chapter sets out the ways in which the government sought to mobilise non-governmental actors in the creation of sustainable local places through initiatives such as BIDs that were presented as a part of a wider 'localism' agenda. It argues that, far from representing the devolution of political power away from the centre, policy developments such as Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) and BIDs, can instead be seen as part of an attempt to maintain centralised control of areas such as regeneration, albeit through new institutional, and potentially undemocratic, guises. In addition to outlining the policy and planning landscape that evolved under the former government, the chapter reviews literatures that have considered the role of businesses in local politics. It identifies key debates and concepts, such as Cox and Mair's (1991) theory of local dependence, that have conceptual resonance for this research. Arguments surrounding the roll-out of a post-

political approach to governance are also examined further. A particular focus is Swyngedouw's (2009a) analysis of the sustainable development agenda that, following global policy directives, became a centrepiece of New Labour's urban strategy. The chapter shows how terms such as sustainability, localism and community were used as discursive devices by New Labour to further flatten the terrains of debate in and around matters of urban regeneration.

Chapter 3 sets out the research design adopted in the thesis, and addresses methodological issues surrounding the use of interviews, participant observation and document analysis. Each of these methods are described in turn, and the chapter gives particular consideration to questions arising from the collaborative nature of the research, namely matters of anonymity, confidentiality, positionality and ownership. Drawing upon Flyvbjerg's (2001) work, the chapter reflects upon the value of social science research, and, more specifically, considers the relative of strengths and weaknesses of adopting a case study approach in researching urban politics. As Bourdieu (1994: 27) suggests, reflecting on the research process in this way is important and, moreover, is an 'instrument of vigilance' that researchers can use to reflect on their own social positioning. Discussions are organised around the pragmatics of conducting inter-institutional research, which, in this instance, took the form of a collaborative project between a private sector-led body and a university. Working in partnership in this way is likely to become more common place given recent governmental directives on higher education and the reorganisation of social sciences research funding. The chapter reflects upon this, and suggests that paying due consideration to the ethical questions that arise from collaborative research is a more pressing task than ever.

Chapter 4 provides a narrative overview of the South Bank's planning and development history. It demonstrates how the area has been the subject of a range of planning and urban policy experiments, the majority of which have sought to unlock the area's (commercial) development potential. The chapter is structured around a series of 'periodizations' that chart the major shifts in local land-use, residential population and employment trends, as well as the broader socio-economic and political contexts underlying these changes. The argument is put forward that, collectively, these periods illustrate the South Bank's transition from a centre of industry and working-class residential population, to one of commerce and culture, and, latterly, to a centre for tourism in its own

right. It is suggested that these localised, socio-economic and cultural shifts have given rise to a commonsense and predominant 'rationality' of the area's development credentials that continues to determine the margins of debate in relation to regeneration today. More particularly, the chapter highlights how the South Bank's complex and contested development past, most famously represented by the Coin Street community campaigns of the late 1970s, has informed the desire to pursue a more consensual approach to regeneration today in which the overall aim is to overcome tensions between residents and businesses in order to "get things done".

Chapter 5 explores the politics that surrounds the formation, and mobilisation of, a local business-led interest agenda. The South Bank case is used to demonstrate how this has been derived from a number of different place-based interests, something which existing literatures are not always sensitised towards. Interview data is used to show how the business-led agenda, forged in and through these (very particular) conceptions of local place, has (re)presented public realm regeneration as an urgent project and the only realistic means through which to create a 'world-class' South Bank more befitting of its prominent global location. The chapter outlines SBEG's membership, its operational structure and organisational aims, and its recent activities and programmes. It shows how, having established a coherent regeneration agenda based upon the (perceived) need for public realm improvements, the group utilised various mechanisms to secure political support for its members' local development vision. The chapter reflects on SBEG's institutional characteristics, and suggests that it can be understood as a hybrid and/or reflexive organisation operating across 'private' and 'public' sectors; boundaries that are becoming ever more blurred under the condition of what has been termed the 'third stage' of modernity (Beck, 1992).

Chapter 6 takes as its central theme the politics of local partnership working. It considers the consequences of partnership governance for democratic politics more broadly and shows how multi-sector partnerships have been conceived as a way to enable what is a selective, business-led interest agenda to operate with a "democratic mandate". In so doing, it considers the role of the South Bank Partnership. Founded by SBEG to act as its local governance body, the SBP has sought to establish ownership of the local development agenda through the publication of a *Manifesto for Action* (SBP, 2006). Drawing upon interview and observational data, the chapter shows how the creation of bodies such as the

SBP represents an attempt to install a non-conflictual local regeneration consensus. The chapter revisits Baeten's (2000, 2009) work and assesses whether this represents a 'post-political' form of regeneration. It suggests that, while there is evidence that SBEG, as a key driver of consensus-building processes, has sought to overturn the antagonisms of the past, points of disagreement and conflict around local development agendas remain. The chapter concludes by arguing that while development, regeneration and planning bear the hallmarks of a post-political approach, Baeten's (2009: 246) suggestion that 'the South Bank Employers Group [is] currently deciding over all the important aspects of regeneration' may be overstated.

Chapter 7 builds upon this argument and explores the processes underpinning the *limitations* to the consensual local development agenda through a focus on the *delivery* of regeneration. Following Honig (1993: 3), the chapter makes the claim that, despite attempts to ameliorate debate about the meaning of local place, resistances to what is an increasingly singular local redevelopment vision, remain. In illustrating these points of resistance, a focus of the chapter is the contemporary manifestation of business-resident tensions. As one of the regeneration case studies presented here shows, attempts have been made to sideline alternative place-based visions through the construction of a shared set of (community) 'needs'. However, while the business agenda has been instrumental in shaping the terrain of debate in this instance, the *limitations* to the business agenda's influence over local regeneration are also in evidence. One example of this is the relationship between SBEG and one of the local authorities, the London Borough of Lambeth. The chapter shows that while attempts have been made, by both parties, to establish what Giddens (1994: 14) calls *active trust*, mutual distrust between business and local government remains and is undermining efforts to deliver local regeneration in partnership.

The fostering of inter-institutional trust is part of a drive, by SBEG, to assume greater control over local services, an ambition it situates within wider government agendas where the devolution of power away from central and local government and towards the neighbourhood level is a stated policy goal. The chapter shows that while this particular brand of *localism* is supported at the executive tier of local government, resistance to the involvement of a private-sector led body in matters of service provision remains a finding that suggests even relatively well-resourced and politically well-connected bodies such as

SBEG continue to depend upon state support of their actions in order to deliver the localism agenda.

Finally, chapter 8 offers some concluding thoughts about the main conceptual, methodological and empirical contributions of the research that are aligned thematically to the research questions. Section 8.2 considers the research's contributions in relation to the formation, mobilisation and conceptualisation of, the business agenda. It suggests that the business agenda should be viewed as a social construction, and also emphasises the place-based nature of private-sector interests. In 8.3, discussions turn towards the themes of inter-organisational working and power relations, and key findings related to processes of institutional legitimisation and the controlling of conflict in local (re)development are outlined. Section 8.4 discusses the research's contribution to discussions and understandings of the post-political. It outlines how the empirical exploration of the localised and/or grounded effects of policy can be used to reflect upon instances but also absences of, political activity. In section 8.5, the focus turns towards the methodological contributions of the research and in particular the lessons, for policy and academic research, to be learned from the South Bank case. This leads into a discussion, in 8.6, about future research agendas and directions, a section that also reflects on current contexts in urban regeneration and governance. It suggests that, in light of emergent policy interventions such as the Local Enterprise Partnerships and Behaviour Change agenda, the need to critically consider the inter-connections between the police order and politics is more pressing than ever.

Chapter 1. 'What matters is what works': The Third Way and the (post) political

1.1. Introduction

The political backdrop to this research is provided by the 'New Labour' years. Following the election of Tony Blair as leader in 1995, a 'New' Labour Party began to emerge amidst a flurry of pronouncements about the urgent need for widespread reforms to governance, public services and planning (amongst others), in order to meet the increasingly globalised challenges of 21st century life. This chapter outlines the *Third Way* thinking that underpinned these developments and which act as ideological and political entry points through which to explore key processes, such as local state restructuring and economic (re)development, that are of particular relevance to the South Bank case.

It describes how, following the party's election victory in 1997, New Labour embarked on a series of reforms to welfare and governance systems under the aegis of creating a leaner and more joined-up state. The chapter shows how Blair's self-proclaimed 'new politics' sought to break with the past and invoked populism and pragmatism in pronouncing a style of government more befitting of an age of *reflexive modernity*. While for some, such as Beck (1994), the arrival of this 'third age' of modernity represents an opportunity to refocus politics towards the needs of the *reflexive* individual through new systems such as *sub-politics*, others have warned of the negative effects of these ideas for democracy (see Dyrberg, 2009, Mouffe, 2005, Rancière, 2010, Žižek, 2009).

The chapter introduces arguments made by scholars who argue that the Third Way, in its promotion of a *new politics* where the emphasis is on developing consensual modes of governing represents a *post-political* project. For Mouffe (2005), New Labour's politics, in which non-antagonistic solutions to the challenges of governance are deemed both desirable and achievable, constitutes a threat to democracy since it ameliorates, by recourse to the logic of 'consensus', the antagonism that is *constitutive of the political*. The chapter reviews writings on the rise of the post-political 'condition' and asks questions of this literature such as; how do we assess whether we are in, or only transitioning towards, this post-political era? In what ways is the post-political expressed in and through 'the local'? And, how are these localised effects indicative of a threat to democracy more widely? The chapter argues that these questions (and others) remain largely unanswered,

primarily because most of these debates are conducted in the abstract, with little by way of empirical exploration of localised and/or grounded effects. The chapter argues that investigation of this kind is essential if a post-political approach to governing is to be recognised, and, moreover, resisted.

The remainder of the chapter is divided into the following sections. Section 1.2 outlines the ideological underpinnings of New Labour's politics. It shows how, having won the 1997 General Election with a landslide majority, New Labour sought to reinvigorate British politics, and did so by embracing the values of the *Third Way*. In instigating a series of democratic and welfare reforms under the aegis of a new politics, Blair's government became a key agent in (re)defining and mobilising Third Way thinking. Three elements of New Labour's reforms are examined here: 1. Welfare state reforms; 2. Democratic reform; and 3: Local state restructuring. Section 1.3 focuses in more detail on the concept of *reflexive modernity*, a theory which underpins much of the Third Way politics, and which posits that the challenges raised by the current stage of modernity require a new approach to governing tailored to the needs of the *reflexive individual*. Section 1.4 introduces a series of critiques of the reflexive modernisation thesis and the approach to governing adopted by New Labour, which, while diverse, broadly see these developments as part of a shift towards a 'post-democratic' or 'post-political' condition. Section 1.5 considers some of the shortcomings of these accounts. The critique centres on a lack of clarity, about if, when and how, we are transitioning towards the 'post-political' era; difficulties which often accompany the declaring of a new and/or 'post' condition.

1.2. New Labour's politics: Pragmatism, populism and communitarianism

> What matters is what works (Blair, 1998 (2003: 31)).

This research, which spanned the final years of the Blair-Brown government, is firmly rooted within the New Labour era, a period in which, as the above quote indicates, the Party consciously distanced itself from the 'old-style' socialism that Blair and other key architects of 'New Labour' considered unable to respond to the twin challenges of globalisation and greater social diversity (Dyrberg, 2009, Richards and Smith, 2004).

As Dyrberg (2009: 150) notes, the Third Way places an imperative on reacting 'adequately and radically to these challenges', a contention which requires 'no veto on means'. What this means, as Dyrberg (2009: 150) suggests, is that, under New Labour, ideological

attachment to wholly state-led provision of services such as healthcare is seen as outdated. Instead, in service provision, what matters is only 'what works' by recourse to 'hard-headed policy instruments' (Dyrberg, 2009: 150). The 'new' or 'necessary politics' that emerged from this conviction was, at one level, highly pragmatic, given it was driven by the need to urgently achieve results by whatever means (Dyrberg, 2009). Yet, the Third Way politics that was enacted under Blair also aimed to carve out a new ideological approach to governing by blending populist, functionalist and communitarian ideas, in order to 'help counter and rectify the perceived ills of contemporary British society' (Prideaux, 2005: 1).

Fourteen years on from the election of New Labour, it is easy to forget the sense of excitement that surrounded their historic landslide victory. Elected on Labour's largest ever parliamentary majority, Blair made it plain in his acceptance speech on 2 May 1997 that, following 18 years of continuous Conservative rule, New Labour was a,

> [G]overnment ready with the courage to embrace the new ideas necessary to make those values live again for today's world a government of practical measures in pursuit of noble causes. That is our objective for the people of Britain (Blair, 1997: no page).

In fact, the creation of 'New Labour' had begun in earnest several years earlier following the election of Tony Blair as party leader in 1994. According to a key 'Third Way' thinker, Anthony Giddens, the New Labour project can be seen as a response to three, interlinked, challenges: globalisation, the emergence of the knowledge economy, and the rise of the individual, or *reflexive citizen* (see 1.3). These social shifts are viewed by Giddens as inevitable by-products of the post-modern condition. 'Old-style' or 'classic' social democracy, with its adherence to rigid state-market divides, is considered unable to respond to these shifts (Giddens, 1994, 1998 (2003)). Neoliberalism, described by Tickell (2003: no page) as the 'defining political economic paradigm of our time', is equally ill-equipped to deal with the complexities of the contemporary age, straightjacketed as it is by its (contradictory) adherence to both market fundamentalism and small 'c' conservatism (Giddens, 1994). For Giddens, this political impasse necessitates the forging of a *Third Way* approach to, 'help citizens pilot their way through the major revolutions of our time' (Giddens, 1998 (2003: 36)).

Blair, along with other key architects of the 'New' Labour party such as Peter Mandelson, became closely associated with Third Way thinking, suggesting that its 'new politics' offered an opportunity to move beyond an 'Old Left preoccupied with state control, high taxation

and producer interests' (Blair, 1998: 1). Instead, the Third Way was held to represent a 'modernised social democracy, passionate in its commitment to social justice and the goals of the centre-left, but flexible, innovative and forward-looking in the means to achieve them' (Blair, 1998 (2003: 27)). Importantly for this research, Blair's populist 'new politics' also envisioned a more conciliatory, consensual style of governing that was designed to directly appeal to 'middle Britain', the so-called 'Mondeo man' electorate (Blair, 1998 (2003: 28), see also Chadwick and Heffernan, 2003). As Blair (1998: 1) pronounced,

> My vision for the 21st century is of a popular politics reconciling themes which in the past have wrongly been regarded as antagonistic – patriotism and internationalism; rights and responsibilities; the promotion of enterprise and the attack on poverty and discrimination.

Blair often invoked a collective 'people of Britain' in his speeches, a characteristic of populism; a political discourse that appeals to the general population or commons in seeking to build a unified coalition. Thus, Blair spoke of New Labour's mandate to 'unite us [as] one Britain, one nation in which our ambition for ourselves is matched by our sense of compassion and decency and duty towards other people' (Blair, 1997: no page).

Laclau (2005: 223) warns of the dangers of 'thinking 'the people' as a social category' in this way. For Laclau (2005: 173 and xi), populism is a 'slippery concept', 'not a fixed constellation but a series of discursive resources which can be put to very different uses', or, put more simply, is 'a way of constructing the political'. As Beasley-Murray (2006: 363) explains, for Laclau, the 'problem of populism is precisely that it embraces a range of diverse and often contradictory political beliefs...it gathers together disparate ideological positions or political demands, and stresses their equivalence in terms of a shared antagonism to a given instance of political power or authority'.

Blair's vision of a new consensus-based politics sought to do just this, and, as Foley (2004: 305) observes,

> [O]perated on the understanding that it was possible to have freedom and fairness, ambition and compassion, market dynamism and social justice, cohesion and flexibility, individual opportunity and community solidarity. The impression generated was that opposing themes could be fused together through goodwill and the kind of imaginative leadership that could elicit a binding social consensus.

For some, this conciliatory style of politics is based upon a set of 'paralyzing contradictions' that stem from the marrying of the liberal tradition 'constituted by the rule of law, the defence of human rights and the respect of individual liberty' with the 'democratic tradition whose main ideas are those of equality, identity between governing and governed and popular sovereignty' (Mouffe, 2000: 3). Mouffe's concerns warrant close attention. The main thrust of her argument is that Blair's Third Way politics - she also directs her analysis towards Schroeder's 'neue mitte' and Clinton's 'triangulation' projects - uncritically accepts the terrain of his neo-liberal, political predecessors. Under New Labour, Mouffe (2000: 6) argues, 'neo-liberal dogmas' such as the 'all-encompassing virtues of the market', have gone unchallenged by socialist-democratic parties who are now 'euphemistically redefining themselves as 'centre-left'' (see also Laclau and Mouffe, 2001). Others, such as Harvey (2005: 5), make similar observations, suggesting that the conceptual apparatus of neoliberalism has become 'so embedded in common sense as to be taken for granted and not open to question'.

Mouffe's (2000) core concern is that, in moving away from the political poles of left and right and towards the 'centre ground,' whilst upholding the neoliberal values of free-market economics, social-democrats have reneged on the fight for more equal power relations. As she puts it, 'when we scratch beneath their rhetoric, we quickly realise that in fact they have simply given up the traditional struggle of the left for equality' (Mouffe, 2000: 6). Instead, Mouffe (2000: 14) argues, the centre-left has pursued a 'politics without adversary' in which the assumption is that all interests can be reconciled and that everybody – provided of course they can identify and support the project in question – can be part of 'the people''.

It is this part of Mouffe's critique that has the greatest resonance for this research. Following her line of argument, it is possible to see how, in representing local partnerships as the best *(or indeed only)* way to capture the interests of 'the community' (see chapter 2), New Labour subscribed to a Habermasian notion of *deliberative democracy* in which a 'rational consensus, of a fully inclusive we' is deemed both possible and desirable (Laclau and Mouffe, 2001: xvi, see also Giddens, 1994). While Laclau and Mouffe (2001) recognise some of the strengths of the Habermasian political project, they firmly reject the notion of a 'fully inclusive' consensus, arguing it is a conceptual impossibility. Moreover, they argue, the 'post-political' presupposition of a 'fully inclusive we' forecloses the acquisition of

equality, the central component of democracy (Laclau and Mouffe, 2001, see also, Mouffe, 2000, 2005, Ranciére, 2010).

While Laclau and Mouffe (2001) centre their critique on the implications of the Third Way for democratic politics, others have taken issue with the former government's (in)ability to deliver on its promises on issues such as social equality. Increasing social equality was best achieved, so New Labour argued, by developing a *social mobility agenda* that Blair, in his 1999 Party Conference speech said would 'push through the changes to our country that will give to others by right what I achieved through good fortune' (The Times, 2010: no page). For some, such as Lister (2001), such statements ring hollow. Lister (2001: 429) argues that New Labour's failure to deliver on social goals – levels of inequality actually increased over the 13 years of a Labour government[1] - is a result of a style of governing that was designed to 'woo' rather than 'lead' the electorate. New Labour's non-confrontational political approach, Lister (2001: 429) argues, was informed by a 'reading of public opinion as conservative and reactionary, whose needs were to be pandered to rather than challenged' and which acted as 'a brake on the government's progressive policies'.

Lister's (2001) analysis highlights how, while New Labour's politics was populist in its orientation towards 'the people', it was also driven by the need for concrete results. As Blair (1998 (2003: 31) stated, 'in giving [values] practical effect, a large measure of pragmatism is essential...what matters is what works to give effect to our values'. Such a sentiment is revealing, and it shows that while founded on the moral pillars of 'opportunity, responsibility, justice and trust' (Blair, 1994: no page), the Blair project also revolved around what Lister (2001: 431) calls a problem-solving or 'what works' approach. Indeed, Temple (2000: 302) contends that this balance, between the social democratic values of social equality and the need to deliver results by whatever means necessary, is skewed towards the former and 'outputs and not ideology are driving the new agenda of governance under New Labour'. As Dyrberg (2009: 143) points out, New Labour saw no opposition between 'basic values and pragmatism when it comes to their implementation'. As Blair suggested, 'we can combine passion for our values with hard-headed practical policies to bring them to life' (Wintour, 1994: no page).

[1] See Dorling (2010).

[2] Even before the 2008 financial crisis, many questioned the accuracy of Brown's statements about levels of growth under his Chancellorship, with those on the left subjecting New Labour's claims about poverty and prosperity levels to particular scrutiny (see, for example, Harman, 2007).

[3] The extent to which mega-events such as the Olympics deliver the job opportunities and

The target-culture that predominated under New Labour is one example of how this conviction shaped policy (see Rummery et al, 2002). From university performance, to NHS waiting-times, under the former government, many aspects of public service provision came under scrutiny as part of the drive towards 'best value'. For Clarke et al (2000: 10), the shift towards a more 'managerial' style of governing, which saw the introduction of 'evidence-based' policy and numerous monitoring, auditing and policy review groups, has tended to subordinate 'other principles of judgement to the managerial calculus of economy and efficiency'. The claim that New Labour's style of governing was one in which 'policies are sold as merely technical solutions to what is assumed to be an agreed problem' is a recurrent theme in scholarly accounts of this period, and is particularly apt in relation to welfare reforms which, as Fairclough (2000: 133) suggests, were represented, in the main, as a process of 'managerial problem solving'.

Reforming the 'welfare state', that is, bringing funding and policies relating to education, health care, social security, housing, and social services into line with the effects of globalisation, was a New Labour election campaign issue, and the incoming government made a series of pronouncements about how years of under-spending and mismanagement had left welfare in 'crisis' (Hills, 1998). New Labour acted quickly to instigate what it argued were essential and unavoidable reforms, and in the 1997 budget, introduced the concept of the New Deal, a flagship welfare programme designed to move people from social security benefits into work (Hills, 1998). This was followed in 1998 by the launch of a Green Paper, *New ambitions for our country: A new contract for welfare*, which set out the broad principles of welfare reform. These were underpinned by the contention that the individual, through partaking in paid work and wider civic engagement, was responsible for the creation of his/her own life opportunities.

For some, in attaching work requirements to the provision of social welfare, New Labour's reforms were ideologically driven and sought to install a 'workfare' agenda, more commonly associated with the United States, and informed by the belief that the causes of poverty and other social problems were, in the main, the result of a failure of individual effort. This is evidenced by Blair's famous pronouncement, 'education, education and education', which reflected his belief that low productivity and growing inequality had their

roots in a workforce made up of individuals, 'ill-equipped for the contemporary global economy' (Hills, 1998: 26).

The idea of earned, that is, *conditional* rights and responsibilities also underpinned what Jones et al. (2011: 50-51) term, New Labour's *behaviour change agenda*. This formed the ideological foundation for a series of welfare reforms which attempted to instigate a process 'through which subjects are encouraged [to]...buy in to particular kinds of behaviour to improve their own (and others) welfare' (Jones et al., 2011: 50-51). This was reflected in commitments to create self-regulating modes of governance that upheld New Labour's conviction that while 'the state can help...communities themselves need to learn that irresponsible behavior exacts a cost for which someone has to pay' (Boyle and Rogerson, 2006: 203).

New Labour's reforms were to be delivered via a policy system that Raco (2009a) likens to a process of 'co-production'. Under this aegis, *aspirational citizens* were not only held accountable for their individual failings but, more positively, could be called upon to take on greater responsibility for themselves and the well-being of their communities (Raco, 2009a). The notion of aspirational citizenship is, according to Prideaux (2005: 103), rooted in structural-functionalist theory in which capitalism is regarded as a 'motivational benign hierarchy that is best suited to promote prosperous and harmonious human relations'. As chapter 2 shows, Prideaux's claims resonate with New Labour's prioritising of the growth agenda, and more specifically, the *assumption* that growth would *continue*, bringing with it opportunities for greater social mobility, poverty alleviation and wealth-creation. At its most extreme, Raco (2009a: 437) suggests, policy began to discursively replicate the viewpoint that in today's modern 'runaway world' characterised by risk and insecurity, only active, aspirational and entrepreneurial citizens will prosper (see Giddens, 1994, see also chapter 2).

Such viewpoints relate closely to the concept of the *stakeholder society*, in which the role of government is to offer 'opportunities to the individual citizen in return for a larger measure of individual responsibility' (Temple, 2000: 303). These opportunities included the promise of greater political autonomy for those *active citizens* deemed sufficiently responsible to manage such rights. In addition to providing an impetus to individual betterment, the concept of active citizenship was invoked as part of the drive towards *discursive democracy*,

deemed necessary to stem the 'decline in voting rates and apparent apathy for representative democratic politics' (Williams, 2004: 2.17). As a Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR) (1998: para.1.21) report reveals, such thinking was incorporated into urban policy whereby the aim was to, 'see any culture of indifference about local democracy dispersed, and local people taking a lively interest in their council and its affairs'.

The creation of new social solidarities, such as the revival of 'community', is seen by Giddens (1994: 119) as one way to (re)engage citizens in questions of democratic politics, and, moreover, is a step towards the achievement of *dialogical democracy* wherein autonomous individuals are empowered with the 'psychological and material autonomy needed to enter into effective communication with others'. However, Giddens (1994: 126) argues, a renewal of social solidarity is only preferable if 'it acknowledges autonomy and democratization – as well as the intrinsic influence of social reflexivity. Such a renewal must recognize obligations, not just rights'. Such beliefs are evident in the phrase, 'no rights without responsibilities' in which obligation is 'not only important because it implies a vertical connection with the needs of others; it matters because it refers to the sustaining of ties with others over time' (Giddens, 1994: 126-7, Giddens, 1998 (2003: 37)).

Invoking the concept of community was one way in which New Labour sought to bring together *reflexive individuals* into mutually beneficial governance arrangements. As Blair (2005: no page) suggests,

> At the heart of my politics has always been the value of community, the belief that we are not merely individuals struggling in isolation from each other, but members of a community who depend on each other, who benefit from each other's help, who owe obligations to each other. From that everything stems: solidarity, social justice, equality, freedom.

Blair's mobilisation of discourses of community in his 'new' politics drew upon, amongst others, the work of Etzioni (1998) who has argued that the reasserting of traditional, family values can foster a sense of mutual responsibility among individuals and create a 'virtuous cycle' where communities would check those who were seen to violate shared moral 'norms'.

The potential of community for the governing of social life is also noted in the *New Localism,* defined by Stoker (2004: 117) as a 'strategy aimed at devolving power away from

central control and towards front-line managers, local democratic structures and local consumers and communities'. The values of localism, expressed through New Labour's stated commitment to engage local communities, through partnerships, in the shaping of regeneration strategy and delivery (see chapter 2), formed part of a wider political reform project, begun by New Labour soon after its election, and which aimed to 'restore' local democracy and plug the 'democratic deficit' it argued had been created by the proliferation of unelected agencies and boards under former Conservative governments (Thornley et al, 2005).

New Labour's devolution agenda also involved the reorganisation of parliamentary powers in the UK, and saw the establishment of the Scottish Parliament and elected Assemblies for Wales and Northern Ireland in 1999. Regional devolution formed another part of democratic reforms, a development that had particular resonance for London governance (Syrett and Baldock, 2001). As chapter 4 details, since the abolition of the Greater London Council (GLC) in 1986, governance arrangements in the city had been highly fragmented, with functions such as land-use planning carved up between central government, London Boroughs and a series of unelected quangos (Jones and Evans, 2008; see also Pimlett and Rao, 2002, Thornley et al, 2005).

Acutely aware of the 'gap in existing governance arrangements' in the UK's financial and political capital, New Labour made reforming London's chaotic governance arrangements a priority (IPPR and KPMG, 1997: 3). Under the auspices of the 1999 *Greater London Act*, a new regional governing body, the *Greater London Authority* (GLA) was established. The legislation set out the conditions for the election of a Mayor and a London Assembly of 25 members whose main role was to ensure accountability by scrutinising the Mayor and his [sic] agencies' activities (Pimlott and Rao, 2002: 163; see also IPPR and KPMG, 1997). The GLA was not designed to be a direct replacement for the GLC reflecting the conventional wisdom that, 'London does not need a general city-wide service provider' (IPPR and KPMG, 1997: 3). However, its impact upon the governance of London, and in particular, matters relating to land-use planning, urban regeneration and local economic development, has been significant.

While the Mayor's powers remain limited when compared to other global city mayors, he or she has control over economic development strategy-making through the *London Plan*

(2004) a wide-ranging and influential document that sets out policy on issues such as sustainability, housing strategy, transport planning and education (see chapters 2, 4 and 6). While the GLA has largely been seen as a successful example of (albeit partial) regional political devolution, some have argued that New Labour's political reforms represent a series of 'ad hoc solutions' rather than a coherent constitutional strategy (see Pike and Tomaney, 2009, Morgan, 2007). However, Straw (2010: 360), a former Justice and Home Secretary and key architect of Labour's constitutional reforms, argues that, despite some mixed successes, the agenda was, nonetheless, tied together by a commitment to,

> [B]reak up traditional centres of power and make those who hold power on behalf of others more accountable for their actions...underlying this programme of reform has been a continuing commitment to the representative concept of democracy—whereby citizens periodically vote for representatives to make laws on their behalf.

This is a sentiment which many reject, and, as Morgan (2007: 1238) suggests, while the former government's political reforms may have succeeded in 'creating the impression of a robust polycentric state in the making', the 'sobering truth is that political power is highly concentrated when key decisions are made' (see also Peck, 2000).

Morgan's (2007) claims go against those, made by Third Way thinkers, that the decentralization of political power is 'the condition of political effectiveness' given the 'requirement for bottom-up information flow as well as the recognition of autonomy' that is generated by a 'detraditionalizing social order' (Giddens, 1994: 93). Such viewpoints are evident in New Labour's conception of the state as a 'generative rather than directive' force, in which its primary role was to provide 'the right framework for individuals to flourish and for local coalitions and partnerships to prosper' (Banks and MacKian, 2000: 250, see also Barnett, 2003).

The 'steering' rather than 'rowing' analogy is central to *New Public Management* (NPM), a management philosophy enthusiastically adopted by governments during the 1980s as part of the modernisation of public services (see Clarke et al, 2000). NPM thinking, which seeks to bring private sector 'efficiencies' to the public sector, saw a drive towards more business-focussed governance mechanisms such as the *Urban Development Corporations* (UDCs) with the aim of bypassing what was perceived to be an ineffective and overly bureaucratic system of local government. While New Labour's restructuring of the local state also singled out businesses as a key actors in matters of economic (re)development and urban governance, the anti-local authority sentiment of the Thatcher years was not in

evidence, and instead the focus was on encouraging business to work in partnership with local authorities and other stakeholders (Barnett, 2003, see also chapter 2). However, while the former government awarded local authorities community leadership powers in the *Local Government Act* 2000, New Labour's approach towards local government represents, for some, an 'iron fist in velvet glove' where autonomy must be earned through adherence to central government targets (Barnett, 2003: 25, see also chapter 7).

New Labour's governance reforms have extended beyond the realm of local government and into the private sector and, as Temple (2000: 302) notes, under a 'new ethos of public service' public–private partnerships have 'become the norm' (see also chapter 2). This 'ethos' reflects another core tenet of New Labour's modernising agenda, the creation of a more 'joined-up' or 'intelligent government' (Blair, 1998 (2003: 2). Cross-sector partnerships, involving a range of local stakeholders such as businesses, third sector representatives and local people, were valorised as a way to deliver policy in a more holistic and effective manner in which the state works to 'provide the material conditions, and organizational frameworks, for the life-political decisions taken by individual groups in the wider social order' (Giddens, 1994: 15).

For Giddens (1994: 15), this *generative politics* constitutes a *new* politics in that it offers 'defence of the *public domain*, but does not situate itself in the old opposition between state and market' (emphasis added). In seeking to move beyond this (perceived) old-new, state-market dichotomy, Giddens (1994) emphasises the importance of establishing what he calls *active trust* between different individuals, social groups and sectors in order to create the conditions for reciprocal political relations. Later chapters of the thesis show that the acquisition of inter-institutional trust is a fundamental feature of partnership working, and particularly so where unelected bodies, such as business groups, seek to represent wider 'community' interests.

For some, it is evident that New Labour's ambitious project of democratic reform has failed. Temple (2000: 302-3) suggests this is because the 'top-down approach to setting output targets', favoured by Blair, undermined the potential for a Third Way approach to generate the 'experimental, pragmatic and decentralised decisionmaking' advocates deemed necessary to meet the social, economic and environmental challenges stemming from increased global interconnectedness (see also Banks and MacKian, 2000, Morgan, 2007).

The conviction that globalization and its effects on the social order necessitate a new style of government is implicit in much of the Third Way thinking adopted by New Labour, and, as such, is explored further below.

1.3. Reflexive modernity and the Third Way

One reading of the Third Way is that it is, primarily, an ideological response to the (perceived) uncertainties of the globalized world (Giddens, 1998). For some, such as Bourdieu (1998: 34), globalization is a 'myth in the strong sense of the word, a powerful discourse'. Yet the globalization thesis continues to exert a powerful effect on contemporary political thinking. In an acerbic review of Blair's 'new politics', Weale (1998: 1394) draws out its assumptions about the irreversibility of globalization and the (perhaps unintentional) implication that therefore 'once upon a time, there was a world of secure jobs, large firms, low unemployment, relatively closed national economies, and strong communities underpinned by stable families'.

The presuppositions that underpin New Labour's statements about globalization are, for Massey (2005: 65), representative of a false consciousness in that they are 'looking backwards to a past that never was'. Similar criticisms are directed towards the *reflexive modernisation* thesis, an influential set of ideas which, collectively, suggest that industrial society has been transformed through the 'disembedding and re-embedding of its dichotomies, basic certainties [and]...anthropologies' through processes of 'self-transformation' (Beck, 1997: 15). The current stage of modernity is held to be distinctive from earlier stages of social development since it is characterised by a set of risks or 'problems resulting from techno-economic development itself', of which climate change is perhaps the most oft-cited example (Lash and Wynne, 1992: 19, see also Beck, 1992).

Two features of the reflexive modernisation thesis are of particular relevance for this research. The first concerns the rise of social individualization or what Giddens (1991: 33) terms, the *reflexivity of the self*. Under the condition of reflexive modernisation, the 'categories of life situations' - such as the 'nuclear family' - that predominated in industrial society are held to be breaking down (Beck, 1997: 95). Instead there is a 'new mode of conducting and arranging life' which presumes the 'individual as an actor, designer, juggler and stage director of his own biography, identity, social networks, commitments and convictions' (Beck, 1997: 95). Beck and Giddens, while the authors most closely associated with the thesis, are not alone in suggesting there has been a qualitative shift in structure-

agency relations in the post-industrial period, and others such as Flyvbjerg (1998: 90) make similar observations, arguing that '[m]odernity and democracy compel a man [sic] to face what Michel Foucault calls 'the task of producing himself'' (see also Lash, 1990, 1994).

The reflexive modernisation thesis has been influential, and, as section 1.2 has shown, the concept of individualism is evident in New Labour's reshaping of welfare along the lines of self-reliance and responsibilisation and the invoking of the idea of the 'upwardly mobile' or *aspirational citizen* (see Raco, 2007a, 2007b, 2009a). However, for many, this perceived shift towards individualisation and its subsequent incorporation into (neo-liberal) policy formations is a worrying trend that risks widening social inequalities, exacerbating the atomisation of social ties, and further eroding collective welfare provision (see Harvey, 1990, Garrett, 2003). Others take a different viewpoint, arguing that self-production can only occur within a 'structured institutional context' in which actors exert agency by favouring 'certain strategies over others...by the way of the strategies they formulate or intuitively adopt' (Hay and Wincott, 1998: 955, see also Raco, 2003a). In relation to processes of urban governance Hay and Wincott's (1998) statement is instructive as it suggests the relative (in)ability of institutions, such as business-led bodies, to reflexively adapt to local, contingent relations has a fundamental impact upon their capacity to shape agendas by recourse to a range of strategies (Raco, 2003a, see also chapters 6-8).

For Rancière (2010: 141-2), who argues that politics 'consists above all in the framing of a *we*, a subject of collective demonstration whose emergence is the element that disrupts the distribution of social parts', the erosion of collective identities, as represented through social forms such as trade unions, is troubling. As Mouffe (2005: 49) asserts, 'the process of individualization destroys the collective forms of life necessary for the emergence of collective consciousness and the kind of politics which corresponds to them'. The 'politics' Mouffe refers to here is one in which the hierarchical order, into which social arrangements are embedded – *le partage du sensible* in Rancière's (2010) terms, or *hegemonic discourse* in Laclau and Mouffe's (2001) – is fundamentally challenged. To do so requires a collective form of action based on the presupposition of equality, 'as an axiom, as an assumption, and not as a goal' (Rancière, 2010: 3). Seen from this perspective, the erosion of collective identities under the rationale of increased social individualization risks foreclosing opportunities for collective action and, therefore, the possibility of politics.

The second area of interest within the reflexive modernisation relates to Beck's (1997: 12) contention that 'the old boundaries between public and private no longer shield us' (see also Beck et al, 2003). Instead, Beck et al (2003: 18) suggest that the boundary between public and private 'appears to be blurring under the influence of new means of communication and to be losing its ability to orient people'. The observation that the post-industrial period has entailed the erosion of public-private boundaries is not new, however the cause and extent of this 'hybridisation' remains disputed (see also chapter 2). It is, however, Beck's comments about the *political impacts* of these developments that have provoked the most intensive debate. These centre on the claim that reflexive modernisation has necessitated the uprooting of politics from traditional, state-led institutions such as Parliament, and its (re)emergence in different guises and in alternative forums (Beck, 1997). For Beck (1997), this process of 'disembedding' has created a new form of political action he calls *sub-politics*, wherein '[a]gents outside the political or corporatist system are allowed to appear on the stage of social design'. These include 'professional and occupational groups', the 'technical intelligentsia', and 'citizens' initiatives' and individuals who 'compete with ... each other for the emerging power to shape politics' (Beck, 1997: 103).

While Beck's statement suggests that sub-politics is predicated upon inter-organisational competition for political representation, a parallel claim is made about the potential for a new collaborative politics wherein, '[t]he questions of functional differentiation are replaced by the questions of functional coordination, cross-linking, harmonization, synthesis, and so on' (Beck, 1997: 27). For some, the emphasis on coordination and the management of difference means that the problems facing societies becoming defined as 'technical problems solvable only by experts' (Finlayson, 2005: 5, see also Oosterlynck and Swyngedouw, 2010, Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1982). Or as Žižek (2001: 196) puts it, we see the emergence 'the post-political world in which the 'administration of people' is supplanted by the 'administration of things''.

1.4. The political and the 'post' political

Žižek's (2001) comments can be situated within a recent, and growing, set of discussions around the notion of the 'post-political'. While diverse, these debates, which are largely from a political-theoretical perspective, share a concern that across much of the developed world, a new style of 'populist politics', motivated by the search for consensus and the rejection of 'old' political divisions of left and right, has emerged (see Giddens, 1998, Blair,

1998). This section outlines some of the core facets of the post-political conditions, and, in so doing, outlines discussions that surround the definition of 'the political', which, for some, Third Way thinking fundamentally threatens.

As 1.2 and 1.3 have shown, authors such as Mouffe (2005: 3), have argued that New Labour's imagining of a world 'beyond antagonism' where consensus through dialogue is deemed possible, is a deeply troubling one in which,

> Violence and hostility are seen as an archaic phenomenon, to be eliminated thanks to the progress of exchange and the establishment, through a social contract, of a transparent communication among rational participants.

Swyngedouw (2009: 612), shares similar concerns, and argues that one consequence of New Labour's political reforms has been the creation of what he terms an 'architecture' of 'populist governing'. This, he argues, 'takes the form of stakeholder participation or forms of participatory governance operating beyond the state in a multi-scalar arrangement and invites, if not assumes, forms of self-management, self-organization and controlled self-disciplining...under the ageis of non-disputed liberal-capitalist order'. Swyngedouw (2010: no page) takes issue with these 'populist tactics', which, he argues, 'invoke a common condition or predicament, the need for common action, mutual collaboration and co-operation'. For him, the danger is that such practices suggest that, '[t]here are no internal social tensions or generative internal conflicts. Instead the enemy is always externalised and objectified' (Swyngedouw, 2010: no page). Swyngedouw's concerns are echoed in the writings of several authors, who warn that the pursuit of consensual or 'non-conflictual' politics (Mouffe, 2005: 29), 'far from representing progress in a democracy', instead heralds the arrival of what Rancière (1991: 102, in Mouffe, 2005: 29) terms a 'post-democracy' defined as,

> [T]he government of practice and conceptual legitimation of a democracy after the demos, a democracy that has eliminated the appearance, miscount, and dispute of the people and the thereby reducible to the sole interplay of state mechanisms and combinations of social energies and interests...It is the practice and theory of what is appropriate with no gap left between the forms of the state and the state of social relations.

For Mouffe (2005: 29), Rancière's comments are indicative of the 'erasure by the post-political approach of the adversarial dimension of the political and which provides democratic politics with its inherent dynamics'. Like Rancière, Mouffe (2005: 9) distinguishes between 'politics' and 'the political'; 'by political I mean the dimension of antagonism which I take to be constitutive of human societies, while by 'politics' I mean the

set of practices and institutions through which an order is created, organizing human coexistence in the context of conflictuality provided by the political'. In this reading of the political, it is evident that the removal of the anatagonistic dimension poses a threat to democracy more widely. For Oosterlynck and Swyngedouw (2010: 1579) making the distinction between politics and the political is critical if the 'increasingly hegemonic postpolitical practices which suture social conflict' are to be contested.

Oosterlynck and Swyngedouw's (2010) statement is worthwhile reflecting upon, as it reflects the viewpoint, held by some theorists, that 'the political' has been under-theorised within urban studies (see Dikeç, 2005). As Oosterlynck and Swyngedouw (2010: 1579) contend, 'research on urban and environmental change has been concerned primarily with policies/politics, but has been strangely silent about 'the political''. For Gottman (1980, in Dikeç, 2005: 171), this is symptomatic of a long-standing conceptual divide in the study of geography and politics, which Dikeç (2005: 171) suggests is only now being addressed through literatures in which 'the issue of geography *and* politics...becomes a significant issue orientating research and informing theoretical endeavours' (emphasis in the original, see also chapter 3).

As Dikeç (2005: 171) points out, giving due consideration to the definition of 'the political' is an important task for urban theorists since, 'different understandings of politics - and `the political' have different implications for the links between space and politics'. By way of illustrating these differences, Dikeç (2005) compares two popular understandings of politics. The first, which draws on a Foucauldian understanding of politics 'as power relations', renders space political 'because there are differential power relations in space that shape the production of space, and that, furthermore, sustain those power relations' (Dikeç, 2005: 172). In contrast, the second reading, wherein politics is indicated by the 'multiplicity of interests, power, and values' and which often informs an urban political economy perspective, 'renders space political because there are groups with different and oftentimes conflicting interests trying to maximize their benefits' (Dikeç, 2005: 171). For Dikeç (2005: 172) neither conceptualisation is adequate, given that 'space does not become political just by virtue of being full of power, or by virtue of the contentious multiplicity of interests embedded in space'. Instead, Dikeç (2005: 171) suggests, space 'becomes political by becoming the place where a wrong can be addressed and equality can be demonstrated'.

In this reading, space is seen as an active component of 'the political', rather than merely a container for conflicting interests. This is a viewpoint which resonates with Cox and Mair's (1991) insistence that locality should be seen as an agent or constitutive part of local political-social relations (see chapter 2, see also Massey, 1993). The agency of the spatial has become widely acknowledged amongst scholars following what is known as the 'spatial turn' in urban studies, and, as Massey (1994: 249) suggests, ''[s]pace' is very much on the agenda these days' (see also Massey, 2005). However, as Lefebvre (1991: 3) notes, despite its ready use in epistemological studies, 'the idea...of space' is often '[c]onspicuous by its absence'.

For others, while the spatial should be present in the discussion of the political, it is not an *active component* of politics. One such viewpoint is offered by Laclau (1990: 68), in which he states, 'Politics and space are antinomic terms. Politics only exist insofar as the spatial eludes us'. For Massey (2005: 44), an advocate of the political possibilities of space, this statement is provocative since the spatial is effectively 'deprived of any potential for politics'. While Laclau's definition of the political is one that presupposes openness, his understanding of space is (necessarily in his view) defined in opposition to the temporal, as he argues, 'temporality must be conceived of as the exact opposite of space' (Laclau, 1990: 41). As Massey (1992: 142) explains, in Laclau's reading it is 'temporal' structures which hold the potential for dislocation of the hegemonic order (and are 'open'), while space 'is any (ideological) attempt at closure'.

Massey's critique of Laclau's theorisation of space points towards a more fundamental set of debates around the constitution of the political. These debates have prompted geographers such as Massey (1992: 114) to suggest that dualistic formulations of space, such as Laclau's, in which space is positioned as a 'static resultant without any effect' are a 'retrograde step' in linking space and the political. This is particularly so if one subscribes to the viewpoint, as in this research, that it is 'not that interrelations between objects occur in space and time; it is these relationships themselves which create/define space and time' (Massey, 1992: 152, see also, Cox, 1991a, 1991b, Raco et al, 2008).

The notion of power is a similarly contested in debates surrounding the constituent of the political. While, as chapter 2 shows, an examination of inter-organisational power relations has been a methodological focus in the study of urban governance, for Rancière (2001: 1),

''Politics'...is not the exercise of power...To identify politics with the exercise of, and struggle to possess, power is to do away with politics.' While Rancière's object of study, that of social domination, is similar to Foucault's, his politics 'is not centered around the notion of power' (Dikeç, 2005: 173). Instead, Rancière defines the essence of the political not as derived from or related to questions of power, but rather as dissensus from the *police*; defined as 'the police order that seeks to put everything in its place' (May, 2008: 48).

In Rancière's (1999: 17) view then, politics (proper) is a rare event that only occurs when 'these mechanisms [the police] are stopped in their tracks by the effect of a presupposition that is totally foreign to them yet without which none of them could effectively function: the presupposition of equality of anyone and everyone'. For May (2008: 52, emphasis added) the value of Rancière's conception of the political is that it highlights the rarity of politics, and, in so doing, demonstrates how 'democratic politics lies in what one *does* rather than in what one receives or is entitled to'. Ranciere's conception of the political thus emphasises the value of understanding the failure of politics as much as the rare instances where politics moves beyond passive to active equality; 'democracy in the deepest sense' (May, 2008: 26, see also Rockhill and Watts, 2009). As May (2008: 75) suggests, it is 'by understanding the failure of politics...we can also understand the hope of politics'.

Taking into consideration the multiple, and often contrasting, definitions and manifestations of the political, as well as being aware of its failures, is important in this research which subscribes to a view of what Honig (1993: 3) terms the 'perpetuity of political contest'. In this sense, the ontological basis of the research derives from a concern, shared by many of the authors reviewed in this section, that attempts to deny the perpetuity of political contest (through, for example, the promotion of 'mutual' or 'shared' solutions), fail to acknowledge the 'ruptures and uncertainties that mark democratic politics' (Honig: 1993: 4). More critically, as Honig (1993: 4) argues, the assumption that it is both possible and desirable to contain or expel the disruptions of politics has antidemocratic resonances, given that democracy is constituted by a set of arrangements that 'perpetually generates (both local and global) political action as well as generating the practices that legitimate representative institutions'.

Crouch's (2000: 1) writings on 'post-democracy' echo some of Honig's arguments about matters of legitimacy and democracy. While Crouch's work, like Honig's, does not use the language of 'post-politics', it encompasses similar concerns, namely the openness (or closure) of democratic systems of governance. Crouch perceives a threat to democracy not as stemming from attempts to overcome or circumvent the conflictual nature of the political, but, instead, as a result of the continued 'power of corporate elites' (Crouch, 2000: 7). Crouch's (2000: 11) assessment of the current state of democracy refers to a world of 'politically active causes, movements and lobbies' that, he argues, belongs to 'liberal rather than *democratic politics*, in that few rules govern the modalities for trying to exercise influence' (emphasis added). Such statements resonate with those of urban researchers who contend that local politics remain beholden to a process of elitism wherein elite interests exert control over political processes.

While it is important to note the variations in authors' conception of the political, these differences can also be overstated, and, at root, many of the writings reviewed here share the same concern; the relative openness (or closure) of democratic processes. As Laclau (1990) suggests, the possibility of a genuine politics is dependent upon the openness of the future, or what Massey (2005: 10) refers to as a 'space of loose ends and missing links' (see also Laclau and Mouffe, 2001, Mouffe, 2000, 2005). It is for this reason that that Laclau and Mouffe (2001: xvii) reject the Habermasian notion of a 'non-exclusive public sphere of rational argument' given that, 'the nature of antagonism...forecloses any possibility of a final reconciliation'.

Dyrberg (2009: 150) relates such concerns directly to the style of government pursued by New Labour in suggesting that the former government's emphasis on the 'need for change' evidences what he terms an 'anti-political Thrust'. As he asserts,

> Change is the vehicle structuring the discourse beyond right/left, as it sweeps out the ideological prejudices, partisan politics and sectional interests of the past....the lead metaphor has changed from right/left to new/old. Thus, Blair typically speaks of old left and new right—old Labour and Thatcherite conservatives—as an outdated and ideological opposition caught up in dogma and doctrine, which is fatal and anachronistic: 'Neither of these approaches, new Right or old Left, fits the modern world.

Dyrberg's core argument is that New Labour's pursuit of a Third Way politics has seen right/left dichotomy replaced by one of 'good/bad', 'where bad refers to dogma, doctrine and veto on means (the old input politics) and good to transparency, accountability,

rationality and autonomy (the new output politics)' (see also Mouffe, 2005). This means that, while New Labour sought to emphasise the possibility of a conciliatory, inclusive and consensual politics, it did not abandon the vocabulary of opposition. Instead, dualisms (as the basis for exclusion from the political sphere) have been re-branded, as 'the progressives vs. conservatives'. As Dyrberg (2009: 150) suggests,

> This move does not make it any less political or confrontational for that matter. What it does is to reschedule the political agenda in a way that is problematic because it cannot pay attention to the functions of right/left, just as it more easily lends itself to moralizing and patronizing types of political discourse.

The discourses referred to above are outlined in table 1.1. Based on quotations from speeches made by Tony Blair, Dyrberg (2009: 150) uses a selection of these key statements to show how New Labour has reformulated friend/enemy 'dividing-lines' into a series of new discursive constructs that evidences 'New Labour's giving up on partisan politics by turning right/left oppositions into non-issues'.

Table 1.1. New Labour's friend/enemy configuration

Arrayed against us:	*On our side:*
The forces of conservatism	The forces of modernity and justice
The cynics, those who just can't be bothered, those who prefer to criticize rather than do	The people who believe in Britain for all the people
The elites, the establishment	Those who believe in a society of equality, of opportunity and responsibility, those who fight social injustice
Those who live with decline, those who yearn for yesteryear	Those who have the courage to change, those who have confidence in the future

Source: Dyrberg (2009: 150)

Mouffe's (2005) analysis of New Labour's politics shares similarities with Dyrberg's. Her contention is that attempts to deny the partisan character of democratic politics, through the disavowing of 'right and left', has seen the political being played out on what she calls the 'the moral register'. Much like Dyrberg (2009), Mouffe argues that politics still contains a 'we/they discrimination', but that 'the we/they, instead of being defined with political categories, is now established in moral terms. In place of a struggle between 'right and left' we are faced with a struggle between 'right and wrong''.

Such sentiments resonate with Raco's (2003b) observations about those who challenged the legitimacy or were overly critical of New Labour's development programmes and who consequently saw their views dismissed as 'unrepresentative'. This is a process that was observed in the South Bank, and those who argued against the predominant development vision were labelled as either unrealistic or unrepresentative of the majority (or both) (see chapters 6 and 7). As Elwood (2004: 756) points out, processes of exclusion always underpin the development of collaborative urban governance which has seen citizen participation channelled into 'particular acceptable forums, limiting citizen voice to particular arenas, removing a basis for resistance to state agendas' (see also Geddes, 2006).

Questions of democratic accountability in relation to urban governance also inform Flyvbjerg's (1998: 1) study of a redevelopment scheme in Aalborg which, in his words, offers a 'an empirically deep and richly detailed case study of modernity and democracy – as manifested in modern politics, administration and planning'. While Flyvbjerg's main conceptual thrust, the 'dynamic relationship between rationality and power', departs significantly from Rancière's, his object of study, the relative effectiveness or failure of democratic political systems, is much the same. Moreover, his contention that undergoing a methodological reorientation from the study of 'what should be done' to 'what is actually done' will enable us to 'obtain a better grasp – less idealistic, more grounded – of what modernity and modern democracy are and what kind of strategies and tactics may help change them for the better' is instructive. This conviction, more than most accounts of the post-political, indicates how, methodologically, the erosion of democracy might be at first recognised and, perhaps more importantly, forestalled (Flyvbjerg, 1998: 3).

There are other parallels between Flyvbjerg's (1998: 5) conception of democracy and those of theorists of the (post)political. Much like Laclau, Mouffe and Rancière, Flyvbjerg (1998: 6) views antagonism as a condition of democracy, suggesting that '[g]overnments and societies that suppress conflict appear to do so at their peril...suppressing conflict is suppressing freedom, because the option to engage in conflict is part of freedom'. And, like Rancière, he rejects the notion that democracy is an entitlement, stressing the active component that must be part of democratic politics,

> …democracy is not something a society "gets"; democracy must be fought for each and every day in concrete circumstances, even long after democracy is first constituted in a society. If citizens do not engage in this fight, there will be no democracy (Flyvbjerg: 1998: 5).

For this research, Flyvbjerg's (1998) particular skill is in conveying the 'concrete' through his retelling of the Aalborg story. His study conveys an intricate level of detail about the project's successes and failures, and the role of different actors at every stage, which he sees as a 'guide for practical action'. After all, he argues, 'we tell stories in order to do things differently'. This, it is suggested, is a highly *political* statement (Flyvbjerg, 1998: 5). Yet, for Oosterlynck and Swyngedouw (2010: 1579), research, such as Flyvbjerg's, that has sought to shed light upon new systems and techniques of governance, has neglected to consider the 'ontological foundation of the political' instead, showing an 'overwhelming concern with the ontic level of urban and environmental policies'. For this research, such statements invite the question; how are we to assess the state of the political (democratic politics) without paying due critical attention to politics defined as the 'institutions and procedures through which society becomes instituted'? (Oosterlynck and Swygedouw, 2010: 1579). Indeed, in the remainder of their paper, Oosterlynck and Swyngedouw (2010) present a detailed case study of night flights at Brussels airport which they use to ground a more conceptual discussion of the post-political. A contention of this research is that it is precisely by exploring, critically, the 'observable and verifiable set of practices, procedures and institutions which form the domain of politics and policy making', that we can shed light on instances (or the absence) of, *political activity* (Oosterlynck and Swyngedouw, 2010: 1579).

1.5. Entering the post-political age?

Ontological differences of research concerned with 'policy' and that which considers the constitution of 'the political' may have contributed towards the relative paucity of empirical detail in critical accounts of post-political processes. While scholars such as Swyngedouw (2007a, 2007b, 2009a, 2009b, 2010) focus much of their analysis on the urban scale and critically link broader, post-political developments to the emergence of policy doctrines such as sustainability (see chapter 2), the majority of accounts of post-politics are relatively abstract in nature. The work of Baeten (2009) is another exception, and his study of the South Bank suggests that, in recent years, alliances between local and global, corporate and community interests have been sought in matters of (re)development and planning. Baeten's analyses of the South Bank (2000, 2009) are instructive in that they show how the development of private-sector partnerships, through policy initiatives of the kind espoused by New Labour, can be seen as part of the post-politicization of regeneration in which conflicting demands are neutralised.

Žižek (1999: 204) explains the process of post-politicization as part of a denial of the collective element of the political whereby, 'post-politics mobilizes the vast apparatus of experts, social workers, and so on to reduce the overall demand (complaint) of a particular group to just this demand with its particular content'. Žižek's comments point towards a situation whereby the political nature of local needs, interests and relationships are denied and contrasted to the unstoppable external forces and demands of the global (see also Massey, 2007). It is this ontological separation of the local and global which facilitates the insertion of a consensual or 'post-political' notion of place. For Žižek (1999: 204), one consequence of this 'suffocating enclosure' is that it gives rise to 'irrational' 'outbursts of violence' as society's ability to intervene in political debates (despite claims of enhanced political participation) in any meaningful way becomes eroded (see Mouffe, 2005, see also chapters 4 and 7).

While urban researchers have begun to take-up the concept of the post-political as a way to analyse, for instance, the UK planning system (Allmendinger and Haughton, 2010) and UK urban policy (Raco, 2011), literature which seeks to explore post-political theory through recourse to empirical examples remains limited. One consequence of this is that there is little discussion or clarity about whether (and if not, *when*) the post-political age has dawned. Instead, it is largely left to the reader to ascertain whether such a shift has occurred. Even if one reaches this conclusion, a series of questions remain. At what point did this transformation happen? By what mechanisms did it occur? And, of particular interest for this research, how does the post-political condition play out at the local scale?

Some of the difficulties in recognising and defining the features of post-democracy are acknowledged by Crouch (2000: 15), who argues that demonstrating the occurrence of any shift is problematic given that '[v]irtually all of the formal components of democracy survive'. However, his contention is that 'warning signs', such as New Labour's absorbing of local government functions 'into either central government agencies or private firms', are already in evidence. For Crouch (2000: 15), trends such as the privatisation of local government will lead to 'erosion [of democracy] in the longer term'. For others, such as Mouffe (2005), the shift towards a post-political style of governance is indicated by the rise of fashionable notions such as 'partisan-free democracy', 'good governance' and 'civil society'.

To some extent, the difficulties in discerning the transition to a post-political or post-democratic age are shared by other analyses in which a transition from one era or epoch to another is claimed (or at least implied). As Massey (2005) suggests, similar issues befall the concept of globalisation which, in heralding the 'new space of flows', implies that 'there is still alongside an assumption that once...those boundaries *were im*permeable'. While Laclau and Mouffe (2001: xviii) insist that their analysis of the political, which calls for the organisation of a new 'left-wing hegemonic project', does not entail a return to an imagined or past 'real' politics. It is hard to entirely dismiss calls that use of the 'post' moniker nonetheless at least *suggests* that a 'more real' politics existed prior to the arrival of the 'current neo-liberal order'.

Similar criticisms have been levelled at the *reflexive modernisation* thesis, criticisms that are, to some degree, anticipated by Beck (1994: 3) who acknowledges that the idea that 'the transition from one epoch to another could take place unintended and unpolitically ... contradicts the democratic self-understanding of this society just as it does the fundamental convictions of its sociology'. In making such statements, Beck is acknowledging the controversial nature of his ideas, as well as highlighting the possibility that a transition to a new political (or post-political) epoch could occur without warning. It is for this reason that research needs to consider the processes and procedures through which the social is enacted. However, such detail is largely absent from writings on the post-political, and, as a result, readers are left to make their own judgements on whether post-political governing is an accurate descriptor of the current condition, or remains only a menacing threat.

1.6. Conclusion

This chapter has provided an overview of some of the core facets of New Labour's politics and has shown how ideologies of the Third Way shaped the former government's projects of state restructuring, and welfare and political reforms. It has focussed in detail upon the reflexive modernity thesis, an influential set of ideas that are embedded within Third Way thinking, and which suggests that the challenges created by the dawning of the third stage of modernity necessitate a new style of politics which responds to the needs of the reflexive individual.

The chapter has also introduced critical arguments from authors who have taken issue with various aspects of New Labour's politics, and, in particular, the governance reforms

proposed under the ageis of reflexive modernity. While, as the chapter has shown, these writings diverge along some key lines, particularly in relation to the composition of the political, there is a shared concern that the New Labour period has seen a shift towards a consensual and non-conflictual style of politics which, at least potentially, undermines democratic practices. In this sense, writings on the emergence of a post-political approach share much with analyses of power and politics from a governance perspective, and which are also concerned with the emergence of closed systems of urban politics. The work of Flyvbjerg (1998), briefly outlined here, is one example of this, and, in its empirical richness of contemporary processes of democratic decision-making, also serves to highlight the relative lack of empirical detail in many accounts of the post-political condition.

Studies of the role of private sector or business 'elites' in local politics also share a concern about the openness of political systems, and often take as their focus the power relations involved in the shaping of urban policy priorities. An argument underpinning this research is that this type of empirical enquiry could add much detail to discussions of the post-political. Accounts of the business role in local politics are reviewed in the following chapter, which focuses on New Labour's urban policy and regeneration agendas more specifically, and which also outlines the actors envisaged as key in the delivery of the government's urban agenda. The level of empirical richness demonstrated by many of these, political-economic accounts, could add greatly to the study of, and resistance to, the post-political. As this chapter has shown, accounts of post-politics, while considering 'what kind of society one wants to establish' (Laclau and Mouffe, 2001: xix), say comparatively little about whether we are in, only transitioning towards, or merely at *risk of*, entering the post-political age.

Chapter 2. Regeneration under New Labour: Business, localism and community

2.1. Introduction

Having outlined the core features of Third Way thinking, and shown how these ideas have informed New Labour's politics, this chapter looks more specifically at the former government's approach to regeneration, local economic development and planning. It critically examines governmental agendas, such as *Sustainable Community Building* (hereafter SCB), which, it is argued, used 'unifying concepts', such as community and sustainability, to flatten the terrain of local political debate in relation to local regeneration.

A key aim of the chapter is to consider the ways in which New Labour sought to mobilise non-governmental actors in the creation of sustainable local places. As already suggested, engaging non-state actors, such as residents and businesses, through collaborative partnerships in the planning and management of local environs was a part of New Labour's reformist agenda which sought to ensure 'best value' and revitalise local democracy. The chapter considers these individuals and groups as 'agents of change', and pays particular attention to the role of the private sector. It shows how businesses, long involved in activities such as place promotion and local economic development, became a renewed target for engagement through government initiatives such as BIDs and LSPs. These initiatives formed part of a wider New Labour commitment to the values of localism, and, at least ostensibly, saw governance powers transferred to the local level.

The chapter argues that, despite commitments made in documents such as the (DCLG, 2008a) *Communities in Control* White Paper, the development of new local governance systems should be seen as part of an attempt to maintain centralised control of processes such as regeneration, albeit through new institutional and regulatory - and potentially undemocratic - guises, rather than the meaningful decentralisation of political power(s). The chapter concludes by highlighting the parallels between the business politics literature and more recent critical accounts of 'post-political' approaches to governing, and suggests that a greater level of interchange between these literatures could help to build a more detailed understanding of the ways in which regeneration policy is formulated and delivered in and through particular *places*. This, it is argued, is crucial if we are to understand if and *how* the post-political condition is being enacted at the local scale.

The remainder of the chapter is divided into five sections. Section 2.2 outlines the New Labour approach to regeneration, and shows how policy was underpinned by an assumption of continued economic growth. It also introduces the concept of place-shaping, introduced by the government as part of reforms to the planning system, and which was based upon particular understandings about the meaning and power of *place*. Section 2.3 takes a similar approach in examining New Labour's use of concepts such as sustainability and community. It shows how these terms, and their corresponding policy goals were brought together in the government's flagship sustainable planning agenda, the *Sustainable Communities Plan* (SCP). Section 2.4 focuses on the delivery of regeneration under New Labour. It demonstrates how various programmes and policy objectives were unified by a belief in the value of partnership-working, and specifically, public-private partnerships which sought to mobilise the resources and expertise of non-state actors in the delivery of regeneration. Section 2.5 considers the role of business in regeneration and local development politics more specifically, and revisits some of the literatures that have sought to conceptualise the private sector role. Finally, 2.6 offers some observations on the productive parallels to be found in existing literatures on the conceptualisation of the business agenda and critical writings on the post-political.

2.2. Regeneration, place-shaping and the growth agenda

As chapter 1 has shown, New Labour's political project was, at least theoretically, about newness. While the former government made multiple pronouncements about the need for change and a new political approach, in relation to regeneration it was largely a case of continuing what previous Conservative governments had already begun. This involved a drive to better integrate urban policy programmes; a project started in earnest following a 1989 Audit Commission review which described urban regeneration and economic development as a 'patchwork of complexity and idiosyncracy' (see Bailey et al, 1995, Cochrane, 2007, Edwards, 1997, Wilks-Heeg, 1996). New Labour's attempts to try and resolve this complexity can be situated with its wider goal to establish a more 'joined up' style of government. Thus, bodies such as the Social Exclusion Unit (SEU) were founded on the proviso that neighbourhood renewal should be seen as a 'joined up problem' to be addressed in a 'joined up way' (Cochrane, 2007, see also Davies, 2002a). Reflecting New Labour's predilection for the marrying of social and economic goals, the SEU instigated a range of policy measures designed to simultaneously stimulate urban economic renewal and address the problem of social exclusion by increasing *social mobility*; a term which featured prominently in many of the former government's urban initiatives.

Cochrane (2007) describes how, informed by a social-democratic commitment to the ideas of social justice, equality and citizenship, New Labour's urban policy directives involved the creation of a number of new programmes and apparatus, including the 'New Deals', 'Policy Action Teams', and a series of area-based initiatives, including a revitalised *Single Regeneration Budget* (SRB) programme. As Eisenschitz and Gough (1993: xiv) point out, area-based local economic initiatives of this type are not new, and, since the 1970s, have 'helped to transform ideas about what a desirable economy is and how to achieve it'.

The SRB was, in fact, the flagship regeneration programme of John Major's Conservative government. Introduced in 1994 to replace the *City Challenge* (CC) scheme, under which local authorities were encouraged to adopt a role as 'client, enabler and partner to a variety of private, voluntary and community organisations' (Malpass, 1994: 301), the SRB was retained by the incoming Labour government and ran, in six funding rounds, until 2001. It enshrined the principle of a transition from centralised service provision to a system of pluralised local governance, and, like the CC, continued to award funding on an inter-urban, competitive basis. The SRB also remained largely area-based that is it was 'targeted within areas ranging from the neighbourhood to the subregion' (Eisenschitz and Gough, 1993: xiv). More critically, and in keeping with suggestions that New Labour has failed to challenge the neoliberal orthodoxies adopted by previous governments, Jones and Evans (2008: 12) argue that the SRB continued to adhere to 'neoliberal policy principals' such as 'best practice' and 'value for money'.

While these principles were upheld under the relaunched SRB, New Labour also sought to bring the programme's aims into line with some of the 'softer' aims of the Third Way. This saw regeneration defined not only as a vehicle to deliver economic growth, but also as a way to 'enhance the quality of life of local people in areas of need by reducing the gap between deprived and other areas, and between different groups' (DCLG, 2001: no page). Despite the SRB's stated focus on social equality, unlike earlier regeneration programmes, such as the Thatcher government's *Urban Development Corporations* (UDCs), the SRB was not targeted exclusively at deprived areas (Jones and Evans, 2008). This created a context whereby private-sector-led urban partnerships could bid, on a competitive basis, for funding to deliver local regeneration schemes on behalf of local communities (see chapter 5). The values of multi sector partnership-working underpinned the SRB, and as a recent evaluation of the SRB concludes, 'a central component [of the programme] was the

increased involvement of the private sector in the process of local area regeneration. The breadth and depth of business approaches to local area regeneration was enhanced' (DCLG, 2010: 51). In total, £5.7 billion of funding was committed to the SRB programme, representing a total expenditure of £26 billion, £9 billion of which came from the private sector (DETR, 2002).

While initiatives such as the SRB were designed to promote public-private working by offering more integrated policy solutions and installing an over-arching funding framework for England, in reality they often exacerbated fragmentation, leading to a policy landscape of 'overlapping and competing strategies' (Ling, 2002: 615). Indeed, some have argued that attempts to streamline urban policy in this way are futile since the 'networks of control that snake their way through cities are necessarily oligoptic, not panoptic: they do not fit together' (Amin and Thrift, 2002: 128). Cochrane (2007: 36) suggests similarly that ambitions to achieve 'holistic' and/or 'joined-up' governance may be impossible without being translated into 'centralized targets, even as responsibility is delegated downwards'. This is an observation that reflects New Labour's tendency to retain centralised control of budgets, programme management and monitoring, even while extolling the virtues of localism (see also Coaffee and Deas, 2008). The tension between a commitment to put communities at the 'centre' of regeneration and the need to ensure programmes in operation 'delivered results' only intensified as the regeneration agenda became more explicitly 'localist' in its orientation (see 2.3, see also Southern, 2001, Morgan, 2007, Brenner and Theodore, 2002a, 200b, Pike and Tomaney, 2009).

While fragmentation, duplication and overlap in matters of urban policy remained of concern to New Labour, there was greater clarity regarding the overall *goal* of regeneration; sustaining economic growth. In a recent book, Dorling (2010: 4) argues that the New Labour years gave rise to what he describes as an 'inevitable' and 'practical' politics' whose mantra is that 'without greed there would be no growth, and without growth we would all be doomed'. Statements, made by Gordon Brown, then Chancellor of the Exchequer, appear to support Dorling's (2010) observations, and in declaring 'the UK has seen the longest period of sustained economic growth for more than 200 years', Brown's (2004) comments reveal how deeply embedded the assumption that economic

growth was 'here to stay' was'[2]. Raco (2011: 5) describes how policy followed on from this logic, a process that has 'shaped the political spaces of debate over the role, character, scale, and substance of spatial policy in England', and created the conditions 'in and through which supply-side constraints could be loosed to enable expansion to take place in England's 'most successful' locations' (Raco, 2009b: 1, 4).

One example of New Labour's tendency to 'pick winners' in matters of development planning and urban policy is illustrated by the *Urban Renaissance* agenda which aimed to revitalise England's towns and cities. The origins of the Urban Renaissance can be traced to 1998, when the then Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott established the Urban Task Force (UTF). Headed by the architect Lord Richard Rogers, its brief was to identify the causes of urban decline and recommend measures to bring people back to repopulate England's towns and cities. The subsequent (DETR, 1999) report, *Towards an Urban Renaissance*, claimed to set out a 'new vision' for urban regeneration, based on design excellence, social wellbeing and environmental responsibility, and the revitalisation of the physical and social fabric of urban areas through private-public funding. The pro-urban tone of the report marked a departure from Thatcher's disdain for 'those inner cities' which she held to be the breeding ground of many of the UK's social and economic ills (Bailey et al, 1995: 60). As Tonkiss (2000: 115) suggests, the discursive shift represented by the Urban Renaissance agenda was pronounced, and '[i]f a language of urban pathology invented the 'inner city' as a problem, a different sort of language is now seeking to valorise it as an investment'.

The latent power of discourses, such as urban marketing materials and policy documents, is well-noted, and, for Bourdieu (1991: 170), becomes capable of 'confirming or transforming the vision of the world...by virtue of the specific effect of mobilization' or, in other words, 'is a power that can be exercised only if it is *recognized'.* As he explains, 'What creates the power of words and slogans, a power capable of maintaining or subverting the social order, is the belief in the legitimacy of words and of those who utter them. And words alone cannot create this belief' (Bourdieu, 1991: 171).

The belief in 'free markets', and in their ability to transform economic and social opportunities at the global and local scale, has, since the 1970s, become predominant. As

[2] Even before the 2008 financial crisis, many questioned the accuracy of Brown's statements about levels of growth under his Chancellorship, with those on the left subjecting New Labour's claims about poverty and prosperity levels to particular scrutiny (see, for example, Harman, 2007).

Harvey (1989) notes, these neoliberal orthodoxies have filtered into urban (re)development strategies that have become increasingly competitive in nature as city authorities have sought to outdo each other in the pursuit of inward investment (see also Hall and Hubbard, 1998, Healey, 2002). Often, as Healey (2002: 1782) notes, this relies upon 'articulating a conception of 'city'...not so much a work of analysis, but of imagination, of 'calling up' the city into consciousness' (see also chapter 4). Healey's comments convey the power of the 'urban imaginary' which has been invoked in place-marketing, whereby urban areas seek to develop and sell a coherent 'city brand' in order to attract visitors, business investors, residents (or all three), and which has been a core feature in the shift towards what Harvey (1989) terms 'entrepreneurial' forms of urban governance (see also chapter 4).

More recently, the *creative city* agenda has emerged in which emphasis is placed on the regenerative potential of cultural and entertainment attractions such as museums and galleries, 'mega-events' such as the Olympics, and the so-called 'creative industries' (Florida, 2002). 'Culture-led regeneration', note Miles and Paddison (2005), has become an urban development strategy adopted by many city administrations as they seek to stimulate urban regeneration[3]. Chapter 5 evidences this, and shows how stakeholders in the South Bank, a place that, until relatively recently, was perceived by many as dangerous and unattractive, have carefully crafted an image of an international cultural playground as part of the transformation of the area's economic fortunes.

However, while these efforts have been rewarded in increased visitor numbers, they have led to tensions with resident groups over the guiding principles of local development, raising the conceptual question of what (or indeed, *who*) local economic development should be *for* (see chapters 4-8, see also Baeten 2000, 2009, Brindley, 2000, Eisenschitz and Gough, 1993, Eisinger, 2000, Newman and Smith, 2000). Eisinger (2000: 331) poses similar questions, and suggests that instances in which local leaders speak of 'creating a 'world-class' city as a 'way of justifying expenditures on entertainment amenities' are becoming increasingly commonplace. Here, Eisinger (2000: 331) argues, the focus is not on offering constituents 'the best basic services that have long been core municipal responsibilities' but rather the sustenance of what he calls 'bread and circuses''.

[3] The extent to which mega-events such as the Olympics deliver the job opportunities and heightened investment opportunities that are often claimed has been the subject of scrutiny. Authors such as Kasimati (2003) point out that measuring the 'benefits' from hosting such events is a highly complex task, while Baade and Matheson (2002) suggest that the economic benefits of hosting such events are often more modest than promoters claim.

While disputes and disagreements over the meaning(s) of place *always* underpin redevelopment schemes, New Labour's urban regeneration agenda appeared to gloss over this, and tools such as place-marketing were presented as a way to foster an urban renaissance for the benefit of whole communities. Many scholars have disputed such assumptions, arguing that the 'image-focussed' nature of urban policy under New Labour was too narrowly focussed on the regenerative effects of urban design (Amin et al, 2000, see also Rantisi and Leslie 2007, Southern, 2001). Others have suggested that New Labour's emphasis on 'image politics' represents a deliberate attempt to downplay the class conflicts likely to emerge from pursuing strategies of renewal that bear the hallmarks of gentrification (Lees, 2003).

What such accounts serve to highlight are the effects associated with the 'labelling' of cities. As Raco (2003c: 38) suggests, at its most extreme this saw cities labelled as either 'hot spots' or 'old industrial districts'. The political consequences of this process are, he argues, profound, since it 'instils particular imaginary geographies' that play a central role in shaping the patterns of future rounds of investment and disinvestment (Raco, 2003c: 38). Statements made by the DETR (1999: 309) calling for the communicating of urban 'success stories' in order to 'reassert the supremacy of the city as a place to live' demonstrate some of the ways in which the policy discourse responded to and reflected these agendas.

The rolling out of the growth agenda, which, following the DETR's report, sought to (re)establish Britain's cities as 'economic powerhouses' (DETR, 2000: 6) was in part conducted via the 'urban imaginary', or what Zukin et al (1998: 628) term the 'meanings of place [that] result from deliberate image creation'. The concept of the urban imaginary is also a key feature of *place shaping*. A concept that emerged in the mid 2000s, place shaping formed part of a broader New Labour project to revitalise the planning system which was felt to have become too unwieldy and overly bureaucratic. As Shaw and Lord (2009: 415) note, the 2004 *Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act* sought to streamline planning, transforming it into, 'a positive instrument designed to help maintain, create and/or recreate sustainable communities' (see also ODPM, 2003, HM Government, 2007). One outcome of this exercise was the emergence of terms such as 'spatial planning' and 'place-shaping' that were used to indicate planning was moving beyond 'narrow land-use regulation' and towards a 'more coordinated and consensus-based approach' (Shaw and Lord, 2009: 415).

Enhancing the design quality of the built environment through 'collaborative effort', was also a central feature of the place-shaping agenda, and the Labour government's *World Class Places* strategy emphasises the 'economic, social and environmental benefits' that design quality can deliver for communities (DCMS and DCLG 2009: 3, see also chapter 5). However, some have disputed the community benefits of such agendas. In Allen and Crooke's (2009) research, particular visions of urban regeneration, mobilised under the place-shaping agenda, are shown to have significant, and often negative, consequences for local residents. As they (2009: 455) suggest, the concept of place shaping can be mobilised to change the terms of debate in relation to urban renewal, 'legitimis[ing] both the mass demolition of terraced housing and plans to develop 'exciting' new dwellingscapes that 'made a statement' to contemporary housing consumers'. In highlighting how place shaping is informed by very specific, and often exclusionary, visions about what urban redevelopment could or *should* entail, Allen and Crooke's (2009) paper is instructive.

Flyvbjerg's (1998) study of urban planning makes similar interventions, and shows how development visions, through the exercise of power, generate their own 'rationality' wherein, following the Enlightenment tradition, they become seen as the only 'logical' possibility for the revitalisation of local place(s). The concept of rationality is most closely associated with Max Weber whose work draws attention to the rationalization processes that he argues have operated across diverse spheres of social life throughout history (Kalberg, 1980). Weber identifies four types of rationality; practical, theoretical, substantive and formal. Their individual qualities are, according to Weber's analysis, complex and often contradictory, and yet, as Kalberg (1980: 1160) points out, 'in mastering reality, their common aim is to banish particularized perceptions by ordering them into comprehensible and 'meaningful' regularities'.

Perhaps surprisingly, Flyvbjerg's (1998) *Rationality and Power* makes only two minor references to Weber's work, yet Flyvbjerg's concern to illustrate how 'rationalities', which are often couched in the language of 'strategy', 'efficiency' and 'expert knowledge', seek to order the social world, owes much to Weber's work. Flyvbjerg's (1998) empirical focus is especially valuable for this research since it considers how rationality derives from, and is deployed by, actors such as business representatives, local authority planners and politicians, each of whom have their own, very specific (and indeed often *ir*rational), aspirations about what regeneration programmes should seek to achieve.

While, as Healey (2002: 1789) points out, the 'strategic capacity to debate the urban is not owned by any one agent', Allen and Crooke's (2009) and Flyvbjerg's (1998) research indicates that some groups are better positioned, relative to others, to 'imagine the city', an observation that is also borne out by this research (see chapters 6 and 7). In this sense then, the power relations that underpin the ability to imagine and then *deliver* regeneration schemes should be seen as both complex and highly uneven in nature. The issue for many of those concerned with the current state of democracy is that this unevenness is either denied, or is seen as something to be *overcome* through the creation of *soft spaces of governance*. These spaces, as Haughton & Allmendinger (2009: 138) suggest, are designed to foster new, 'soft' outcomes in planning and development, such as the building of 'networks, partnerships and institutional capacity'. However, as Haughton and Allmendinger (2009: 138) point out, these 'alternative institutional spaces in which to imagine possibilities for future place making' lie outside of formal, democratically mandated, governance systems. It is developments such as these that authors such as Mouffe (2005) contend constitute an immediate danger for democracy.

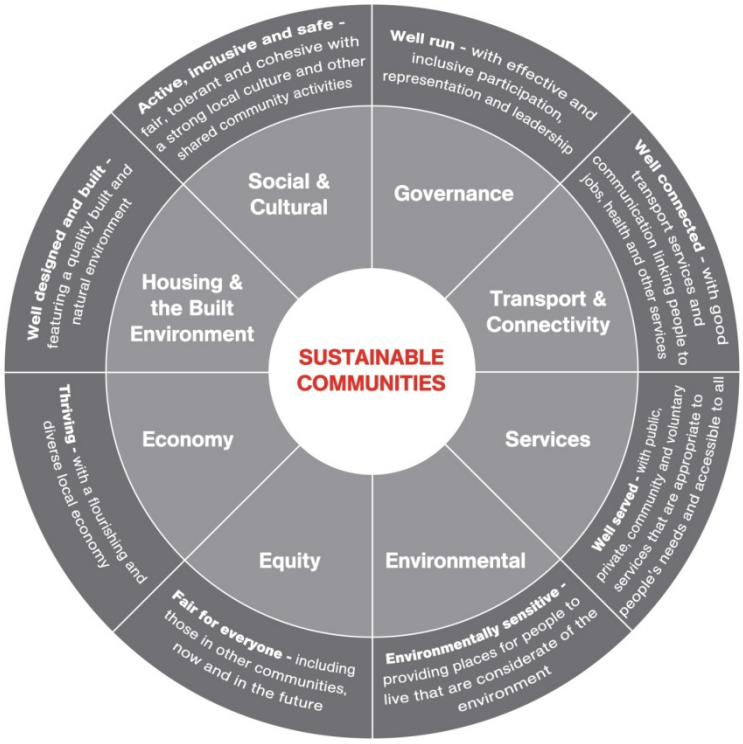
2.3. Unifying concepts: Community and sustainability

This section builds upon these debates and suggests that New Labour emphasised the 'soft' aspects of planning, development and regeneration as a way to flatten the terrain of political debate around these issues. It shows how 'unifying concepts' such as sustainability and community were brought together in broad-based regeneration agendas that emphasised the mutual benefits to be gained from economic development. Southern (2001: 265) notes how the bringing together of goals such as social justice and economic growth not only established a predominant notion about what is (morally) '*right*' in local redevelopment but, moreover, discursively recast regeneration as a 'neutral space' in which the formation of a consensus around a set of shared priorities was possible (emphasis added).

Perhaps the clearest example of how debates around planning, regeneration and development drew upon moralised conceptions of community and sustainability, is the *Sustainable Communities Plan* (hereafter, SCs Plan) (ODPM, 2003). Launched in 2003, the SCs Plan was the central document in a broad-based urban policy agenda that sought to achieve a series of 'soft' lifestyle goals, such as enhanced environmental sustainability, citizenship and community engagement, through a series of measurable 'hard outcomes' such as house-building targets, enhanced economic growth, integrated transport systems

and the creation of new jobs (see figure 2.1). As Haughton and Counsell (2004: 141) suggest, maintaining high and stable levels of economic growth remained the core concern, and the government's definition of sustainable development, in which economic, environmental and social sustainability are addressed in an integrated way, was adopted to ensure 'environmental concerns did not detract too much from pursuing a national growth strategy'. Similarly, Whitehead (2003: 1201) notes, that, in recent years, there has been an 'exploitation of sustainable development strategies as basis for economic restructuring', something that he attributes to the 'contemporary neo-liberal order in which intensifying interurban competition' has become part of a 'zero sum economic game'.

Figure 2.1. The Sustainable Communities Wheel



Source: ODPM (2004: 19)

While sustainable development has been high on the international political agenda since the *Brundtland Report* of 1987, Helms et al (2007: 267) suggest that '[i]n its post-2000 policy proclamations...New Labour has begun to marry a discourse of urban renaissance with one of 'sustainable communities', which at least in part recognizes the value of a more 'holistic' approach for revitalizing cities, involving themes like safety, crime control, quality of life, and place attachment'. New Labour's approach to sustainability was, as well as broad-brush, highly ambitious in that it sought to establish a, 'new paradigm that sees

economic growth, social justice and environmental care advancing together and can become the common sense of our age' (Brown, 2006: no page).

Such viewpoints informed the concept of *Sustainable Community Building* (SCB), a delivery mechanism for the wider aims of the SC Plan that invokes the concept of *active citizenship* in suggesting that neighbourhoods should be planned, delivered and governed in such a way to produce,

> [C]ommunities that can stand on their own feet and adapt to the changing demands of modern life. Places where people want to live and will continue to want to live (ODPM, 2003: 3).

Much like the 'picking winners' strategy of the urban renaissance, the SCs Plan also involved the singling out of (economically) 'successful' regions, namely the south east of England. In so doing, the SCs Plan effectively recast the region area as 'an object of social policy in its own right', based on the assumption that '[w]hat is good for the South East is...good for the rest of England' (Cochrane, 2006: 694).

Others have taken issue with the Plan's grafting together of economic, social and environmental concerns, arguing that this was not premised on a clear understanding of the (inter)relations between them (Littig and Greissler, 2005). Thus, far from producing a more 'joined-up' policy landscape as intended, under New Labour, urban policy goals have remained contradictory and overlapping in nature. Further criticisms surrounded the SC Plan's commitment to environmental sustainability, and the feasibility of delivering ambitious targets for new housing given the historically low levels of house-building that characterised the late 1990s and early 2000s (see ODPM, 2003).

The governance implications of New Labour's urban policy agendas have also been subject to critique, and Boyle and Rogerson (2006: 203) suggest that terms such as 'sustainable community' and 'social capital', have been used as 'instruments of governmentality' to 'exercise a strong disciplinary force on local communities' through the setting out of what constitutes appropriate or inappropriate modes of behaviour. In this sense, they argue, while professing a 'deep commitment to local empowerment', New Labour's urban project has instead created 'the first contours of a new "shadow state"' wherein communities are required to self-regulate through what Foucault calls the 'conduct of conduct' (Boyle and Rogerson, 2006: 203, Foucault, 1991).

Swyngedouw (2009a: 602) has made similar observations about the effects of sustainable development policy initiatives, arguing that they form part of a wider 'moral crusade' revolving around a 'consensual vision of the urban environment'. Developing his arguments using the notion of the post-political, Swyngedouw (2009a: 611) suggests the particular danger of documents such as the SCs Plan is that they seek, discursively, to enshrine the idea that 'sustainability' can be managed 'by means of a series of technological, managerial and organizational fixes'. This he argues, 'imagines the possibility of an originally fundamentally harmonious nature', in which '[c]onflict is careful managed and is only permitted at the margins of political debates' (Swyngedouw, 2009a: 611).

For Swyngedouw (2009a: 613) urban policy agendas, as represented in documents such as the SCs Plan, have become a part of a process of closing-off or closing-down debate in which 'vague concepts like the creative city, the sustainable city, the green city, the eco-city, the competitive city and the inclusive city replace the proper names of politics'. Such terms almost always have positive connotations and their bringing together in policy agendas such as SCB is, for Swyngedouw (2009a), tantamount to the use of what he calls 'populist tactics'. Unifying (in that almost everyone agrees that they are necessary to some degree) concepts such as sustainability are thereore used to 'invoke a common condition or predicament' (such as global warming) which points towards the need for 'mutual collaboration and cooperation' (Swyngedouw, 2009a: 612). Whitehead (2003) takes a similarly critical stance, and suggests that the focus on achieving sustainable development as a 'policy goal' has obscured analysis of the sustainable city as an object of political contestation and struggle.

Similar concerns surround New Labour's use of the word 'community' in policy, a term that is often invoked to suggest the possibility of harmonious solutions to the challenges of urban governance. The 2008 government White Paper, *Communities in Control* (DCLG, 2008a: 3) set out the government's intention to 'devolve more power to citizens' to 'help build vibrant local democracies'. A so-called 'neighbourhood agenda', in that governance powers were purportedly to be granted to bodies and individuals at a 'local' and/or 'community' level, the notion of *discursive democracy* is again in evidence, and an aim was to (re)engage citizens in matters of democracy by,

> [E]mpowering people to take decisions about the priorities and direction of local public services, by giving people ownership and a stake in the running of public services, and devolving power and opportunity within the public services to local communities (Blears, 2008: 3).

These communities were seen to include local residents but also business actors, and yet, despite the frequently fractious nature of inter-relationships between these two social groups (see chapter 4), a cohesive community, wherein collaborative and mutually beneficial solutions can be reached, was deemed possible. For others however, the promotion of community governance is an empty promise which, instead of reconstituting local political relations sees, the 'selective and carefully controlled redistribution of administrative functions, a new set of state-society relations determined within existing government structures' (Brand, 2007: 625).

Brenner and Theodore (2002b) adopt a similarly critical outlook, and suggest that discourses of localism are part and parcel of a process of 'neoliberal localization' which, while it involves a refocusing of the scale of governance away from the national and towards the local or regional level, maintains the doctrine of market superiority. For Brenner and Theodore (2002b), under *neoliberal localization*, it is the mechanisms for the delivery of economic competitiveness that are transformed, producing a series of 'institutional realignments' that include; the establishment of cooperative business-led networks in local politics; the mobilization of new forms of local economic development policy that foster inter-firm cooperation and industrial clustering; the deployment of community-based programs to alleviate social exclusion; the promotion of new forms of coordination and inter-organizational networking among previously distinct spheres of local state intervention; and the creation of new regional institutions to promote metropolitan-wide place-marketing and intergovernmental coordination (Brenner and Theodore, 2002b: 374-5).

Such realignments are based upon a series of assumptions about the benefits of local or community-level governance, and fail to acknowledge the exclusionary politics that can be associated with representations of the 'local scale' (see Massey, 1993, Raco, 2007a, 2007b). Thus, while its invocation in policy is overwhelming positive in tone, as Dalby and Mackensie (1997: 101) suggest, the reality of 'community' is rather more messy,

> [L]ocal communities do not necessarily exist in already pre-given form....Environments may be socially constructed in specific controversies, but so too are the communities that are formed around the specific issue, communities often construct specific local identities as part of the campaign against an external development understood as a threat'.

Harvey (1996: 425) also contends that the complexities of community are frequently overlooked. As he suggests, 'community has always meant different things to different people and even when something looks like it can be found, it often turns out to be as much a part of the problem as a panacea....Well founded communities can exclude, define themselves against others, and erect all sorts of keep out signs' (Harvey, (1996: 425, see also Massey, 2005, Raco, 2007a).

Massey (2007) suggests that government policy often adheres to what she terms an *introverted politics of place* or a 'place-based particularism', which, she argues, has obscured the lines of responsibility between the global and the local, enabling cities to operate without due consideration for their responsibilities beyond indentified spatial boundaries. This, Massey (2007) contends, has also resulted in the partial depoliticisation of the urban political arena, a trend which, in order to be reversed, requires a greater level of engagement with the 'geographical imaginary' of place-based politics (see chapter 4). Murdoch and Marsden (1995) share some of Massey's concerns, and argue that processes of globalisation necessitate the expansion of conceptions of 'the local' beyond notions of fixed or bounded spatiality. Instead, they suggest, localities should be seen as 'constituted by various networks operating at different scales' (Murdoch and Marsden, 1995: 368).

2.4. Delivering regeneration: The partnership panacea

For Eisenschitz and Gough (1993), the promotion of local or community regeneration initiatives can be seen as part of the adoption of a 'neo-liberal agenda' in local capacity building. This, as Lovering (1995) suggests, has resulted in the selective insertion of 'communities' into partnerships created from the top-down in a process that offers little in the way of genuine empowerment or resourcing to local actors. As chapter 1 has shown, New Labour's pursuit of a 'what matters is what works' approach in service delivery led to the continuation of the privatisation of state-owned assets and services that was instigated by the Conservative governments of the 1980s and early 1990s. Blair saw much of value in this approach and argued that ideological divides between 'private' and 'public' were largely arbitrary and stood in the way of the efficiencies to be gained from working in partnerships that represented wider 'communities of interest'.

Much of Blair's enthusiasm for the breaking-down of barriers between private and public sectors was premised upon a New Labour commitment to enterprise and competition, or a drive towards a 'new economics of the public interest which recognises that a thriving competitive market is essential for individual choice' (Blair, 1991: 33). As Mullard (2000: 203) suggests, such statements saw 'arguments of private versus public provision...bypassed'. Instead, as a 1999 New Labour election manifesto document re-emphasises, 'What counts is what works, not ideological attachment to either private or public' (Labour Party, 1999: 10).

Such beliefs filtered through to policy, and notably the (2007: 28) *Lyon's Inquiry into Local Government*, a report focussing on the role of the private sector in local governance and which calls for local authorities to engage in place-shaping by 'making best use of intelligence and evidence of future trends; engaging local partners, businesses and residents in a debate about the long-term aspirations for the area; and focussing their performance management on outcomes'. The Lyons Enquiry suggests there is an appetite, amongst businesses, for 'greater engagement with local authorities on economic development issues' and recommends a series of policy initiatives, such as business rate reforms, in order to bring business and local government actors into collaborative partnerships (Lyons, 2007: 28).

State-led attempts to harness the resources and the perceived leadership capabilities of the business sector are far from new, and, as Body-Gendrot et al. (2008) point out, the lines between the public and private sectors in relation to matters of urban planning, space management and land ownership have been blurred for many centuries. In relation to urban policy, the partnership agenda has long roots, and can be traced back to the late 1960s and the passing of the 1969 *Local Government Grants (Social Needs) Act* under which the present era of urban regeneration grants was established (Davies, 2002a, see also, Cochrane, 2007, Wilks-Heeg, 1996, Edwards, 1997). By 1978, the *Inner Urban Areas Act* had identified partnership working as the 'preferred model' for intervention, calling for greater involvement of the private sector in regeneration partnerships (Davies, 2002a). However, it was not until the election of the Thatcher government, and more specifically, the introduction of the 1982 *Urban Development Grant* (UDG), that the mechanisms to leverage private sector funds into cities via government grants were created (Davies, 2002a).

By the early 1990s, the drive to incorporate greater private sector input into regeneration was still evident, but the anti-local authority stance of the Thatcher years had been softened, with programmes such as the *City Challenge* (CC) emphasising the need to building greater co-operation between local authorities and businesses. Fostering greater co-operation was also a central aim of the New Labour government, and new directives, namely the *Town Centre Management* (TCM) and *Business Improvement District* (BID) schemes were established as a way to give local businesses a greater say in the management of neighbourhoods (see section 2.5).

The non-governmental or 'third sector', was also seen as an important player in creating localised systems of service-delivery as part of a more 'bottom-up' approach to regeneration. As Milbourne (2009: 279) notes, post-election, the Labour government worked quickly to draw up a Compact with the third sector (Home Office, 1998) signalling its intentions to 'raise the sector's profile' and marking a shift in public policy from 'welfare state hierarchies and marketisation, towards networks and partnership working'. Indeed, as Lowndes et al. (1997: 335) suggest, under New Labour, cross-sector partnership-working was not only seen as a more effective way to deliver services in a 'modern world', but also held to be the key in developing a 'pluralist model of urban regeneration in which all parties have a say and hence provides a basis for legitimising decisions and actions in the absence of formal democratic mechanisms'. As Cochrane (2007: 36) identifies, 'partnership has been presented' by New Labour 'as a panacea' for a wide range of urban problems.

Perhaps the clearest example of New Labour's enthusiasm for partnership working was the development of *Local Strategic Partnerships* (LSPs) under the *Local Government Act 2000*. Hailed as the 'partnership of partnerships', LSPs are designed to provide a platform for community, voluntary and business sector representatives, working in partnerships with politicians and local authority officers, to establish neighbourhood renewal priorities (Geddes et al, 2007, see also Taylor, 2006). LSPs are responsible for the preparation of community strategies, a central component of the SCs agenda, and are designed to set out a long-term vision and series of policy priorities for a local area through a collaborative process involving local residents, businesses, local councillors and other local authority actors.

However, despite the former government's claims that LSPs would encourage 'co-governance' in policy areas such as neighbourhood regeneration, Johnson and Osborne (2003) argue that LSPs remain subject to strong central government control. For Braithwaite (2005), the development of governance networks, such as LSPs, can be seen as part of a process of *regulatory capitalism*, wherein the growth of 'hybrid' - that is a combination of state and corporate - forms of governance have repositioned the governing role of the state. The suggestion is not that the state's powers have been 'rolled back' (as 'pure' neoliberal theory would require) but instead, that role of government has been recast into new regulatory forms, such as multi-sector bodies, that oversee the privatisation of state assets.

The concept of regulatory capitalism is a helpful one in examining the relative capacity, and influence of, different actors in the governance of urban space. For some, despite the suggestion that new modes of governance such as LSPs represent a more 'bottom-up' approach to urban decision-making, in reality, community involvement in these models has, in the words of Taylor (2006: 276), taken 'a back seat'. This research evidences Taylor's claims and shows that while community actors such as local residents appear to play only a minimal role in LSPs, business groups have become central players, and are represented on senior-level LSP boards. However, and as chapter 7 shows, this is not to suggest that government actors no longer retain an influential role in matters of local governance and, as Braithwaite (2005) contends, networked modes of governance continue to represent forums through which the state controls governing at the local level, through, for example, the regulation of targets and setting of budgets centrally.

Others suggest that a shift towards partnership governance is evidence of the rise of the New Localism, defined by Stoker (2004: 117) as a 'strategy aimed at devolving power away from central control and towards front-line managers, local democratic structures and local consumers and communities'. The roots of localism can be traced back to the 1980s, a period which saw centrally-administered attempts to bypass local governmental structures (Cochrane, 2007). However, for Coaffee (2005: 109), the New Localism's discursive construction of the 'enabling' state has its ideological underpinnings firmly entrenched in the Third Way politics (see also Aspden and Birch, 2005). Such viewpoints are enshrined in policy agendas such as the SCs Plan, which views the input of the non-governmental actors as critical in the creation and management of sustainable urban places and calls for,

'effective engagement and participation by local people, groups and businesses, especially in the planning, design and long-term stewardship of their community, and an active voluntary and community sector' (ODPM, 2003: 5).

For others, invoking concepts such as 'partnership', 'community' and 'citizenship', while continuing to enshrine the values of free market competition, is confirmation that 'New Labour is developing its own distinctive version of neo-liberalism...Thatcherism with a Christian Socialist face' (Jessop, undated: 2, see also Stoker, 2003, Hills, 1998). Levitas (2000: 194) makes similarly critical comments about New Labour's mobilisation of the concept of community in urban policy, suggesting it is used, discursively, to 'mop up all the ill-effects of the market and to provide the conditions for its continued operation, while the costs of this are borne by individuals rather than the state'.

In making such statements, Levitas (2000) also highlights how New Labour's urban policy was underpinned by a very particular way of thinking about 'community'. As Raco notes (2003b: 237), most typically, this centred upon a notion of 'communities of *place* (or those resident in bounded urban spaces)', a conceptualisation which tends to overlook the complex, and potentially exclusionary and divisive nature of community (see also Massey, 2005, Raco, 2007a, 2007b, 2007c). As Giddens (1994: 126) warns,

> Those who think of 'community' only in a positive sense should remember the intrinsic limitations of such an order. Traditional communities can be, and normally have been, oppressive.

While it is not clear from Giddens' statement how 'traditional' communities can be set apart from other (non-traditional?) communities, his comments indicate the complex and conflictual nature of community. Cochrane (2007: 53) makes a similar point, and in his analysis of the SCs agenda, he suggests that references to 'community' are narrowly focussed on the creation of 'new' communities while existing communities are left to their own devices to search out more sustainable ways of living (see also Cochrane, 2006).

Such accounts highlight the need to be sensitised towards the multi-layered, and often exclusionary, nature of community. The South Bank case is no exception and, as chapter 4 shows, the meaning of community is both complex and continually evolving. It also contested, and the arrival of residents with different lifestyles, values, and cultural/social norms to the pre-existing, largely working class population of the 1960s and 1970s, led to flash-points of tension, particularly around matters of local (re)development and planning.

While this example is far from unique, New Labour's policy doctrines fail to acknowledge even the possibility of such tensions, and instead focus on the mutual benefits to be gained from collaborative working at the local-scale. As this statement from the DETR suggests, '[t]he advantage of partnerships is that if properly constituted and run they are more suited to implementing the bottom-up approach to regeneration than a single central of local government agency' (DETR, 1997, par. 5.2.1).

The DETR's statement highlights another, related, tendency amongst politicians and policy-makers; the valorisation of 'the local'. The uncritical promotion of the positive benefits seen to flow from what are conceived of as 'bottom-up' or more localised ways of working is, for Massey (2005) highly problematic (see also Purcell, 2006). Indeed, Massey (2005: 164) rejects the notion of 'general spatial principles' such as 'the local scale' outright, arguing that, ''the locals' (even if they can, even provisionally, be defined) are not always 'right', nor is abiding by their majority opinion always the most democratic course to adopt' (Massey, 2005: 164). However, such claims are precisely the kind made by New Labour in the 2008 White Paper (DCLG, 2008a: i-ii) which aimed to 'empower people by empowering communities and citizens and ensuring that power is more fairly distributed across the whole of our society' an approach that will 'help to build more vibrant local democracies'.

Despite the seemingly endless promotion of partnership working by New Labour, its effectiveness as a regeneration delivery model has been questioned, with some arguing that while programmes such as the SRB 'represented an important stimulus for local partnership activities', regeneration continued to be perceived as 'driven more by changing central government priorities than by local aspirations' (Davies, 2002a: 174). For Harvey (1989: 6), the issue is more fundamental since the local and/or community scale serves to deny the tensions between different communities of interest in the planning, management and governance of urban space. This, he argues, is problematic given that 'the power to organise space derives from a whole complex of forces mobilised by diverse social agents. It is a *conflictual process*' (Harvey, 1989: 6, emphasis added).

2.5. Understanding the business agenda

Harvey's (1989) statement reflects a long-held interest in exploring the power dynamics that shape and exert influence over local political systems. While, more recently, theorists of the rise of the post-political have called into question the functioning of contemporary democratic systems, these same issues have informed numerous other scholarly projects.

Studies from a governance perspective, which recognise the diverse technologies of government used in the shaping and management of cities, have been especially effective in bringing the role of non-state actors in matters of urban politics under scrutiny. In particular, Foucauldian perspectives on power have provided a tool for study of inter-relationships between businesses, local communities and governmental representatives, and have pointed towards the need to understand not only the techniques of power involved in city governing, but also their spatial effects. This section explores some of the literatures that have utilised governance theory to shed light on the inter-relationships between state and non-state bodies in processes of urban political strategy-making, regeneration and renewal. Many of these writings have sought to explain, through recourse to detailed empirical accounts, the role of what is termed the business 'interest' or 'agenda', in urban political relations (see Phelps and Valler, 2006).

Davies (2002b: 302) notes that urban regeneration has been a 'fertile ground' for governance debates, and this is particularly so since the late 1980s and early 1990s when the emergence of a series of urban partnerships presented UK scholars with the task of explaining 'newly changing city politics' (Ward, 2000: 427). In a body of research that became known as the *new urban politics*, the focus was 'shifted away from the local state as a key site of collective consumption...or social consumption...towards a narrower interest in place marketing, urban growth coalitions and urban regimes' (Cochrane et al, 1996: 1319). Some saw this as part of a concern, by government, not to regenerate cities, but instead to adapt the 'urban landscape to the spatial requirements of the post-industrial society' (Barnekov et al, 1989: 230).

One effect of this, as Hubbard and Hall (1998: 2) suggest, is that the local state becomes run in an increasingly 'business-like' manner, focussed on activities such as urban promotion and the search for 'best value' in service provision. Government also becomes increasingly pre-disposed to forging links with non-state actors, and particularly with private sector actors, who are perceived as being well-equipped to help meet the requirements of an entrepreneurial approach to urban governance (Cook, 2009). Cochrane (1991: 292) conceives of this shift as a form of *local corporatism* in which businesses become active participants in the local political process. One example of this is the emergence of state-created mechanisms such as the *Urban Development Corporations* (UDCs), introduced

under the Thatcher government as a way to increase private sector involvement in the renewal of inner urban areas.

UDCs have been the subject of much interest from urban researchers, not least because, as Bassett (1996: 540) points out,

> These new agencies largely by-passed both local authorities (on ideological grounds) and local Chambers of Commerce (too weak and ineffectual). Government appointments to the boards of these new agencies provided privileged routes of access into urban policy-making for a new generation of local business leaders.

While, as Bassett's (1996) statement indicates, the boards of UDCs were largely comprised of private sector representatives, the extent to which they were 'business-led' has been much-debated (see Brownhill, 1992, Cochrane, 1999, Cochrane et al, 1996, Imrie and Thomas, 1999). Indeed, several commentators have argued that, despite their outwardly pro-business appearance, the UDCs represented a form of business engagement that was, in effect, constructed 'from above' by central government (Cochrane, 1999: 115, see also Valler, 1996). This 'state-centric' view of state-business relations argues that the growing role of the private sector in local affairs should be seen as 'part and parcel of the process of state restructuring, not as some autonomous, grassroots revival of business paternalism' (Peck and Tickell, 1995: 76).

Ward (2000) highlights how, in seeking to understand the causes, as well as potential effects of these governance shifts, many researchers looked to the United States (see also Peck, 2002, Davies, 2002c). As Valler (1996) notes, while scholars shared a concern to unravel the inter-relations in local urban political processes, US accounts often took an 'elite' or 'instrumentalist' approach to local public-private relations. One reason for this is the different configurations of the local state, which, in the north-American instance, has meant that 'state-led' or 'state-centric' theorisations of the business role in local politics have had less explanatory power than in the UK. Instead, research has been more focussed on addressing the question, as posed by Wood (2004: 2108); 'why, in the absence of compulsion, do businessmen and women answer the 'call to arms'?'

Addressing Wood's (2004) question is a key task for proponents of *urban regime theory,* a school of thought that seeks to uncover 'the informal arrangements by which public bodies and private interests function together in order to be able to make and carry out governing decisions' (Stone, 1989: 6). Here private sector engagement in urban politics is explained as

an effect of pluralised governance arrangements which ensure that no one group has overall control of local political relations. The empirical concern of regime theory is thus to highlight the multiple relations and institutional arrangements used by local actors to achieve urban policy goals (Brown, 1999). Regime theory has its roots in the US community power debates of the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s which resulted in a series of empirical accounts of local political relations split broadly into two camps; those which subscribed to the viewpoint that political power was the preserve of an urban elite ('elitism') (see Hunter, 1953), and those who insisted that political systems were becoming increasingly open to the influence of a plurality of organisations ('pluralism') (see Dahl, 1961).

Authors such as Elkin (1987) and Stone (1989, 1993, 2004), key proponents of a regime theory approach, built upon these debates, but also sought to move conceptions of local political relations beyond what they conceived of as narrowly economistic explanations, informed by Marxist thought. Instead, Stone's (1993: 2) work aimed to show 'that political economy is about the relationship between politics and economics, not the subordination of politics to economics'. In this sense, as Brown (1999: 72) explains, regime theory is underpinned by the contention that, 'politics is not simply a means to some desired ends (economic rationality); politics are an end in themselves'.

For Brown (1999), the value of this approach is that it reinstated the possibility for politics that elitist theory, with its insistence on the existence of a unified city interest in producing economic 'benefit for all', effectively foreclosed (see, chapters 5 and 6). This research is sympathetic towards this viewpoint, and in the following section, sets out a range of perspectives that highlight the diverse nature of city interests. It is also worthwhile highlighting at this juncture the parallels between Brown's (1999) comments on the 'possibility for politics' and those of writers such as Mouffe (2005) who warns of the dangers posed by the pursuit of a consensual politics which, she argues, forecloses the antagonistic dimension essential to the political.

Regime theory has been subject to extensive critique, particularly by those who have argued its empirical focus on US cities limits its ability to explain developments in the UK (see Ward, 1996, Davies, 2002c, 2003, Wood, 2004). Other criticisms have focussed on regime theory's lack of conceptual power and clarity (see Ward, 1996), shortcomings which, for Cook (2009), underline the need to develop, through theoretical and empirical

exploration, understanding of not only the political implications of 'regime formation', but also the *motivations* of those actors with a stake in urban politics (see also chapter 5).

This is an aim of this research and is also highlighted by Cox (1991), who argues that questioning the extent, depth and source of interactions between stakeholders in processes of urban redevelopment remains an important scholarly task. In a wide-reaching paper in which he interrogates the issue of abstraction in the study of urban politics (see also chapter 3), Cox takes issue with 'assumptions about interests in urban development' which he claims have been 'promulgated...vigorously' by urban political economists. Cox (1991) is referring specifically to Logan and Molotch's (1987) work in which they suggest that US cities have become increasingly characterised by development regimes or 'growth machines', forged between business elites, state actors and also, albeit to varying degrees, local residents. For Logan and Molotch (1987), these coalitions of interest seek to promote growth and halt the economic decline of parts of the city, and have played a central role in reshaping the political interrelationships of urban governance.

Cox's (1991: 273) criticism centres on the primacy that Logan and Molotch (1987) attribute to 'land-based elites in the formation of urban growth coalitions', a reading which, he argues, does not bear close scrutiny given the range of public-private bodies including 'banks and public utilities' (whom Cox describes as 'major actors') engaged in 'promoting local economic development'[4]. Cox's (1991) concerns about the way in which local interests in urban politics are categorised, and subsequently theorised, are very relevant for this research given that its central empirical focus is a multi-sector partnership body, South Bank Employer's Group (SBEG). The group, while bearing many of the hallmarks of a private enterprise, also readily identifies itself as (variously) a non-profit, third sector and quasi-public sector organisation (see chapter 5).

Yet, despite the increasingly hybridised nature of urban governance, in which public-private coalitions are now prominent, consideration of the role of 'non-state' bodies in urban politics is often limited to discussion of the influence of private sector 'elites'. This characterisation is one that, at least implies, that the business role in urban politics is one of significant influence and power. This research suggests that such a reading does not adequately reflect the contingent and often fragile nature of the private sector interest,

[4] Many others have taken issue with growth machine theory, with Cochrane (1999: 112) for example, suggesting that the model can be read as 'inherently fatalistic and even determinist'.

and also fails to capture the increasingly multi-sector or 'hybridised' nature of local stakeholder groups (see chapters 5, 6 and 7).

One reason for this lack of conceptual flexibility may be the comparatively recent development of a 'softer' style of regeneration partnership in the early 1990s. This saw a 'simple reliance on market forces' and a focus on engaging the urban business elite downplayed, and the introduction of quasi-public agencies charged with a broader remit of economic and social development (Bassett, 1996, see also Jones and Evans, 2008). For Bassett (1996) these developments were underpinned by a 'new localist discourse' which extolled the 'civic consciousness of Victorian business elites, and urged contemporary business leaders to take up similar leading roles in their local communities'. Strange (1996) argues similarly that, by the early 1990s, 'regeneration had largely succumbed to the rhetoric of business localism which emphasised the power of the collective business interests of business in regenerating local economies through participation in organisations such as Training and Enterprise Councils' (Strange, 1996: 143-4).

To some extent these (state-led) developments reflected an ideological shift that was already underway in the business sector, and which saw industry representative groups, such as the Chamber of British Industry (CBI), look to develop 'corporate community involvement' through initiatives such as the *Business in the Community* programme (BITC, undated)[5]. Bassett (1996: 540) suggests that these programmes were designed to appeal to the 'enlightened self-interest of businessmen', an understanding of the business interest that has its roots in corporate philanthropy, and which saw the private sector seek to become involved in 'developing policies to combat the effects of local economic decline and the collapse of local property markets'.

In fact, the lines between altruism and 'business sense' have long been blurred, something that is not always portrayed by accounts that conceive of the political mobilisation of the private sector as, straightforwardly, a matter of profit maximisation (Cook, 2009). As the Director of US global corporation AT&T (Ellinghaus, 1980: 19) explained in a speech in 1980, in reality, 'business-sense' and community support are closely inter-linked concepts,

[5] BITC was established following a conference where a group of US business leaders involved in the urban regeneration of Baltimore and Detroit in the 1970s shared their experiences with their British counterparts.

> Most astute business managers today recognize an obligation to support the community that supports us. If altruism doesn't always guide us in such pursuits, then, most certainly, good business sense does. On the other hand, the community eagerly solicits our help, largely because business managers have a reputation for making tough decisions.

Such (self) representations of an enlightened but tough business community resonate with those of corporate actors described in Tickell and Peck's (1996: 606) study of local politics and which refers to the 'male-dominated elite network, the self-proclaimed 'Manchester Mafia'' who play a key role in the city's economic development planning. Tickell and Peck's (1996) study, which also highlights the gendered-nature of business agendas (see chapter 5) characterises the business role in local redevelopment as one of 'urban deal making' based on the availability of (public) funds and the ability to represent local interests effectively, a sentiment which remains relevant today (see chapters 5-7, see also Cochrane, 1999, Cochrane et al, 1996). Others, such as Jonas (1996: 617) describe the remaking of local governance in similar terms, suggesting that 'pro-business agendas are established through behind-the-scenes networking and negotiation', something which business leaders contrast, often unjustifiably, to the 'bureaucratic' and 'unwieldy' local state.

While this characterisation is, for some, unfair (see Cochrane et al, 1996), it is one also described by Tickell and Peck (1996: 609) who demonstrate how business elites' explain their role in local politics as 'showing the way' and 'making things happen'. Similarly, Bassett (1996) highlights the Confederation of British Industry's *Initiatives Beyond Charity* (1988) programme which suggested that 'only local businessmen could provide the kind of long-term vision that local political leaderships were said to be incapable of providing' (see also Bassett, 1996, Cochrane, 1999, Strange, 1996). The conviction that 'business knows best' given its entrepreneurial outlook and access to the skills needed to deliver change is often (unfairly) contrasted to the 'inefficient' and 'bureaucratic' local state (see chapters 5 and 7). Such representations are based upon a (perceived) 'cultural divide' between the private and public sectors. While the boundary between 'public' and 'private' is, as chapter 5 shows, becoming increasingly porous, the perception that each is driven by 'different sets of competing and incompatible values' remains persistent and, furthermore, presents a barrier to the localised partnership working seen as key to the development of *generative politics* (Karre et al, 2008: 2, see chapter 7).

Whereas New Labour's conception of the business role in local politics envisages private actors working *collaboratively* with other stakeholders, including residents, empirical

accounts have tended to paint a stark picture of a powerful, overwhelmingly male, and aggressive culture of business. One such account is provided by Tickell and Peck (1996: 596) in which they contend 'consensus-building, negotiated compromise and the use of conventional bureaucratic channels have no place...[the business agenda]...is focused on getting things done, aggressively'. Their finding, that 'it is invariably businessmen who occupy the most powerful positions' in local politics is suggestive of a private sector consisting entirely of (male) 'all-powerful' business 'elites' and, furthermore, it at least appears to suggest that the business interest is both autonomous and represents a coherent agenda (Peck and Tickell, 1996: 597). This may be unintentional, or indeed, an accurate reflection of a case in which powerful male business elites *did* in fact dominate local politics. However, this research finds evidence of a different set of practices, and argues that the business sector is far from a coherent, powerful, elite. From this perspective, a renewed assessment of the private sector role in local politics is required; not least because consensus-building, in contrast to what Peck and Tickell (1996) describe, is now an important way in which business actors' broker support for their agenda(s) in matters of local (re)development (see chapters 5, 6 and 7).

Others have highlighted the tendency, in the literature, to represent the business interest as the dominant force in local politics. As Jonas (1996: 617) suggests,

> …while it is easy to be seduced into believing that these developments are inevitable...these organizations have struggled to impose their agenda on local politics and in some cases their 'guerilla' tactics have not always been in the best interests of the industry sectors they seek to represent.

This is a sentiment that resonates with Peck's (1995) description of business leaders in Manchester in which he highlights the limitations of the business agenda. Likening private-sector actors' role in redevelopment to that of opportunistic 'shakers' rather than purposive 'movers', Peck's (1995) account also emphasises the mutual distrust between local businesses and local government, a dynamic which this research also sheds light upon (see chapter 7, see also Lovering, 1995).

The failure to adequately convey the 'contingent nature' of the business agenda is, for Jonas (1996: 618), representative of wider failing in the new urban politics literature which, in his view, has 'paid scant attention to interfractional divisions within the business leadership of local economies and to the idea that governing coalitions may form at different territorial scales in the state'. Cox and Mair's (1988, 1989) concept of local

dependence attempts to provide some insight into these processes and, specifically, 'into why particular agents have interests in the future of particular places' (Cox, 1998: 20). Cox's (1998: 274) work holds that,

> All firms, branches of the state, are locally dependent, that is, dependent on a localized set of social relations which can only be changed with difficulty, although the scale of that localization can vary a great deal.

The social relations referred to here include local markets, the skills of workers in the area, or local knowledge(s) which can constitute a 'spatial trap' for a range of actors such as property developers, utilities, banks, owners of office buildings and local governments who are, to varying degrees, 'dependent upon the fortunes and health of a particular local economy' (Cox, 1991b: 274). The particular value of Cox's analysis, for this research, is in its conceptualizing of local social structures or, to use Cox's (1998: 20) words, in conveying how social relations 'become not merely *in* but also *of* a particular place'. Such a reading departs from much of the new urban politics literature in that it presents the locality as an *agent* 'rather than simply the recipient of wider social processes' (Raco, 1997: 77). This approach is valuable, and is revisited in later chapters which show that SBEG's operational identity is as much a product *of* the South Bank locality as it is a reflection of the group members' interests *in* the locality (see chapter 5).

Understanding the complexities of the business agenda remains a pressing task for urban researchers, not least because the political enthusiasm for public-private partnerships shows no sign of abating. Indeed, in relation to UK urban policy, the arrival of New Labour saw a strengthening of the commitment to involve, in partnership with the state, businesses more closely in the regeneration and management of urban affairs. As the SCs Plan (2003: 3) states, 'Our ambition is to work with the public, private and voluntary sectors to quicken the pace of change'.

Statements of this kind appear to represent a new opportunity for the business and community sector in planning, creating and maintaining sustainable communities, and new policy directives such as LSPs, BIDs and TCM schemes were established in order to provide a mechanism for non-state actors, such as businesses, to engage in urban governance. BIDs represent a significant institutional development in the roll-out of the place-shaping agenda since they are designed to offer businesses a means through which to coordinate local service provision and engage in place management in collaboration with local authorities.

As the Chief Executive of the British Urban Regeneration Association has claimed,

> BIDs have enabled greater engagement with businesses, Local Authorities and other major stakeholders aiming to improve the business environment. BIDs also allow businesses to speak with one unified voice and a clear business mandate can be demonstrated. Connecting people in this way is core to...successful place-making (British BIDs, undated, no page).

Introduced under the *Local Government Act* (2003), the BID model is well-established in other countries such as the US and Canada, where Business Improvement Associations and Districts have existed since the 1960s. In the UK, BIDs are defined as a 'business-led and business funded body formed to improve a defined commercial area', and are funded through the collection of a BID levy, usually around 1% of a business occupier's ratable value (British BIDs, undated). This differs from the US instance, where only property owners are required to pay BID levies. UK legislation stipulates that BIDs can only be established following a ballot in which a majority of the local businesses eligible to pay the levy vote in favour. They are also subject to a renewal ballot every 5 years. The majority of the UK's 111 BIDs are based in city centres, and focus on activities relating to the 'safe, green and clean agenda', such as the operation of commercial recycling schemes and security patrols.

As Helms et al (2007: 271) note, public realm management has risen up the political agenda under New Labour, reflecting the government's belief that the 'economic profitability of urban space...is patently dependent upon it being maintained as clean, secure and attractive'. Political support for the BID model, which, in its ability to let businesses' chose whether or not to form a coalition also resonates with the broader aims of the localism agenda, is perhaps unsurprisingly, high. The 2007 *Lyons Review of Local Government* identifies BIDs as a key mechanism through which to implement place-shaping, and BIDs also feature in the London's Mayor's (2004) *London Plan* and (2010) *Economic Development Strategy* (see Heart of London, undated).

One reason for the political popularity of BIDs may be that, while they demonstrate that the government's ear is open to the needs of business in local regeneration, they in fact offer only a marginal set of powers to the private sector, while central government maintains overall control of urban agendas. In a review of the business role in place-shaping, Lyons (OPM, 2006) shows that while business actors felt BIDs had increased their ability to make decisions and initiate service improvements, they were criticised for their 'bureaucratic burden and complexity' and 'limited appropriateness'. Overall, Lyons (OPM,

2006: no page) found that the majority of business actors felt the 'big challenges around infrastructure could not be solved in the current system'.

Another viewpoint is that, even taking into account these limitations, the increased involvement of public-private partnerships in the management of cities is having a profound effect on the form and organisation of urban space. For some, this has seen cities becoming increasingly undemocratic centres for commerce and consumption where activities such as 'loitering' are no longer permitted (Low and Smith, 2006, see also Minton, 2009). Fears about the 'sanitisation' and/or over-management of urban space through the rollout of policy measures such as alcohol exclusion zones are pertinent for this research, and chapter 5 shows how business-led partnerships have been in the vanguard of developing management services such as security patrols with the aim of producing a 'world-class' public realm.

Others have drawn attention to the ways in which BIDs, and other local regeneration partnerships, shape and steer local development discourses. In a study of a *Business Improvement Area* (BIA) in Toronto, Catungal and Leslie (2009: 2576) highlight how BIA members from the property development sector have mobilized 'particular discourses and strategies to regulate the area's internal economic geography', an observation that draws attention to the less-visible influences that business-led bodies can exert over local development and regeneration strategy (see chapters 5 and 6).

A similarly critical approach is taken by Justice and Skelcher (2009: 738), who, in a comparative study of the US and UK, find that the rollout of the BID model has had significant implications for democratic governance. Justice and Skelcher's (2009) study is informed by a conception of BIDs as a self-governing form of *third-party government*, which they define as a 'variety of institutional forms in which the state acts through intermediary organizations, such as not-for-profits, businesses and community associations, to deliver public purpose'. In a statement that echoes those made by Levi-Faur (2005) and Braithwaite (2005) about the rise of *regulatory governance*, Justice and Skelcher (2009: 738) contend that BIDs see governance powers devolved 'by a popularly elected government to an institution in which private interests dominate'. Such a characterisation also resonates with the central tenets of elite theory which holds that, even as governance

bodies become more numerous, private interests continue to dominate local politics (see Crouch, 2000, chapter 6).

Justice and Skelcher's (2009) consideration of the inter-relations between new institutional forms such as BIDs, and pre-existing democratic governance systems, warrants further attention here, not least because it explores the mechanisms BID members utilise in order to secure organisational legitimacy, consent and accountability. While these issues have long featured in governance studies, debates have sharpened in recent years as urban policy has become orientated towards facilitating the development of *deliberative* or *discursive* forms of democracy through the inclusion of (often unelected) partnership bodies in matters of local governance. It is worthwhile briefly reflecting here on the ways in which legitimacy, consent and accountability are defined. In their research on BIDs, Justice and Skelcher (2009: 742) define *legitimacy* as the means through which an institution's mandate – its authority to act in the public (and/or private) interest – is awarded. They point out that these means are multi-various, and legitimacy may be legislated for, or may depend upon less-formalised, but equally powerful, 'collective civic judgement that the BID's authority is being used in the public interest' (Justice and Skelcher, 2009: 742, see also chapters 5, 6 and 7). Justice and Skelcher (2009: 742) argue that the latter instance reflects the 'realpolitik' that 'legitimacy is more dependent on a regime of support from citizens than authorization through a legislative process'.

For this research, informalised conceptions of legitimacy are shown to be powerful in determining organisational influence over local development politics. As chapters 6 and 7 show, SBEG contends that it has secured, through democratic means, a mandate to represent the interests of the South Bank community. This claim is then used to acquire, and mobilise, the *active trust* deemed necessary to legitimate its activities and which Giddens' (1994) identifies as critical in the formulation of a *generative politics*. Having secured the capacity to act, Justice and Skelcher (2009: 742) contend that 'third party' governance bodies, such as BIDs, need to consider the issue of *consent* or, the 'institutional characteristics through which it reaches decisions on the specific actions that it will undertake'. Finally, the issue of *accountability* must be addressed. This is understood as a two-part process of 'giving an account' – the process of explaining the decisions and performance of the BID to the local community, and 'holding to account' – or, 'the ways in which the mandate of the decisionmakers is reconfirmed, amended or rejected' (Justice

and Skelcher, 2009: 742). In exploring how different BIDs respond to the democratic challenges of legitimacy, consent and accountability, Justice and Skelcher (2009) propose a typology based around three governance designs in self-governing 'third party' organisations: 'club,' 'agency' and 'polity' (see table 2.1).

Table 2.1 – Three archetypes of self-governing third-party governments

Governance archetype	Legitimacy	Sources/expressions of authority consent	Accountability
Club	Private initiative	Members' agreement on benefits to be acquired and pricing	To members, related to benefits delivered
Agency	Mandate from external government actors	By nominated or appointed board	Performance reporting to external government actors
Polity	Public political process	Deliberation between different visions within and among the relevant publics and stakeholders	Through formal democratic events and ongoing dialogue

Source: Justice and Skelcher (2009: 703)

In the club 'archetype', Justice and Skelcher (2009: 742) contend, 'legitimacy, consent and accountability are based on serving the interests of a narrowly defined constituency, such as the property owners within a defined urban subdistrict, often employing a neocorporatist design that grants broad powers to the leaders of constituent organizations'. In contrast, the 'agency' archetype is a 'managerialist instrument for the delivery of government policy in that the institutional design accords maximum discretion to government officials over the design and implementation of policy instruments'. Finally, the 'polity-forming' archetype is based on 'values that promote significant public and/or stakeholder involvement in the institution's governance' (p.742). The value of Justice and Skelcher's (2009: 743) typology is reflected in the authors' aim to 'generate more precise characterizations of existing arrangements [and]...a more nuanced basis for exposing the way in which questions of democracy are resolved'.

This is an ambition that this research also shares. Indeed, shedding light on the practices of democracy in matters of local economic development and planning is a particularly pressing task given the governance reforms espoused by New Labour, and, latterly, the Coalition government, which suggest that 'third party' governance bodies such as BIDs will become

more commonplace (see chapter 8). Yet despite this, with the exception of those accounts outlined above, Harding et al's (2000: 976) observation remains apt,

> There have been relatively few studies which demonstrate, empirically, how private-sector involvement in, and influence over, urban governance is manifested and with what effect.

For Cook (2009), the priority for future research is to develop modes of analysis that capture the diverse interests represented by the 'business agenda'. As his own research indicates, the decision to engage in business-led bodies is never a 'fully rational calculation' (Cook, 2009: 936). This is a viewpoint which this research is sympathetic towards, and the increasingly complex inter-institutional landscapes that characterise contemporary urban space indicates the need to consider interest coalitions that, while ostensibly business-led, also seek to represent the interests of *non-business* bodies, such as non-profit organisations, the third sector and other community bodies as a constitutive part of the 'private-sector' voice. The ways in which these diverse interests are fed into local partnership bodies and played out in local urban politics remains poorly understood.

Part of the reason for this is that the business interest or 'voice' is often abstracted from its wider social context. This is something which Raco (2003a: 1854) seeks to address and he calls for 'the strategies pursued by representative business associations...[to be] conceptualised through an understanding of their status as social organisations, made up of reflexive subjects'. This sentiment is of particular interest given that it highlights how institutions respond to 'bureaucratic mechanisms of consultation and inclusion' through the 'prioritisation of agendas and the reorganisation (and refocusing) of capacities and structures' (Raco, 2003a: 1854). Indeed, as the Lyon's (2007) review suggested, often this involves businesses calling for *more*, rather than *less*, local authority leadership in place shaping in recognition of the limitations of what the private sector can achieve in the current system (see also chapters 5 and 7).

In demonstrating how non-state actors' agency is influenced by, and contingent upon, a range of 'bureaucratic mechanisms', Raco (2003a) suggests that businesses' ability to influence and shape political agendas is not a result of inbuilt 'power', but rather reflects a (reflexive) deployment of those capacities available to them. As subsequent chapters of the thesis show, this includes the use of mechanisms such as personal networks, the (re)flexive deployment of multiple institutional identities, and the creation of consensual governance structures.

2.6. Conclusion

This chapter has set out the New Labour approach to urban regeneration and reviewed the major programmes and policies that characterised the government's urban governance agenda. It has shown how New Labour's urban policies were underpinned by assumptions about economic growth and characterised by the (largely uncritical) inclusion of terms such as sustainability, community and 'the local' that, together, suggested economic development was a terrain in which mutually beneficial solutions were both possible and desirable. Greater understanding of these concepts, and their deployment through policy initiatives such as BIDs, is required in order to assess the accountability of delivery mechanisms such as multi-sector regeneration partnerships.

The chapter has also shed light on the actors deemed crucial in the delivery of urban regeneration, with a particular focus on the role that the private sector has been encouraged, by New Labour and other governments, to adopt in local governance. It has revisited a series of writings, many of which are from an urban political economy perspective, which are of particular value for this research given their focus upon the construction and impacts of the business agenda in local political relations. However, there remains a need to challenge the assumption, implicit in much of the business politics literature, that business actors are motivated purely by economic returns in matters of urban redevelopment. This research shows that while economic self-interest is one explanatory factor underpinning the private-sector agenda, the agency of the spatial and, moreover, that of *local place*, should also be considered a component part of the creation and mobilisation of interest agendas (see Cox and Mair, 1991).

The chapter has shown that, despite a large business politics literature, the role of the local in the creation and deployment of interest agendas remains poorly understood. This is particularly the case in relation to the New Labour period, and, with few exceptions, writings on, and theorisations of, the business agenda are decades old. A key aim of this research is therefore to update existing accounts by developing a depth empirical account of a business-led partnership's role in local politics and, specifically, the creation and delivery of regeneration policy. The following section explores the methodological issues associated with this type of research, and outlines, in more detail, the research questions and research design adopted in the thesis.

Chapter 3. Researching regeneration: Aims, perspectives and practices

3.1. Introduction

This research explores the involvement of a business-led partnership in the regeneration of the South Bank area in London. The research was conducted from 2007-2010, a period which spanned the last three years of the New Labour government. As previous chapters have shown, the former government perceived regeneration partnerships as providing efficient, locally responsive and democratically accountable forms of urban renewal, and sought to support the creation of public-private partnerships through funding schemes such as the SRB. Yet, despite the fears of some authors about the dangers these developments present for democracy, understanding of their localised and/or grounded effects remains limited. The aim of this chapter is to reflect upon the research methods used to shed empirical light on these processes. Self-reflection of this kind is a critical exercise for social scientists since, as Sayer (1992) notes, all methods adopted, and thus the research findings derived from them, are value-laden. Thus, arguments presented here, and elsewhere in the thesis, should be seen as embedded in, and constituted by, a range of social values and contexts, including the researcher's own positionality in relation to, the research process.

The chapter is divided into four sections that interweave points of debate from the methods literature with personal observations derived from the experiences of conducting this research. Section 3.2 introduces the research themes and questions that underpin the thesis. Section 3.3 discusses the selection of the South Bank case study, and explores wider issues associated with taking a case study approach to urban research. Section 3.4 examines the methodological questions raised by studying political processes, and outlines the research design adopted in the research. Section 3.5 is concerned more specifically with accessing and researching business-led partnerships and reflects upon the researcher's experiences of conducting 'reflexive' research through the ESRC-CASE grant model.

3.2. The research focus: Themes and research aims

This study has four inter-related research aims:

- To explore the politics of regeneration in London's South Bank
- To describe the inter-organisational networks involved in regenerating the South Bank
- To identify the motivations of private sector-led groups in local regeneration, and to critically assess the forms that private sector involvement in these processes takes
- To explore and evaluate policy-making processes in relation to regeneration on London's South Bank

An overall aim of the research is to develop greater understanding of how the private sector stake in local regeneration is negotiated, and to explore the ways that business views in regeneration are represented and shape policy outcomes. This is an important, yet underexplored area of study. As the previous chapter has shown, previous research in this field has tended to characterise private sector actors as a homogenous and powerful 'elite' that exercises much power in matters of local urban politics. This research seeks to show that, while businesses are, through local institutions such as LSPs and BIDs, exerting an influence over matters of regeneration, development planning and policy-making, there remains much socio-institutional complexity that conditions the extent to which businesses engage in, and shape, systems of local governance.

3.3. Exceptional cases count: Taking a case study approach

These issues are explored through a case study of the South Bank in London. The area defined as the 'South Bank' in this research is shown in figure 3.1, and reflects the operational boundaries of South Bank Employer's Group, a business-led regeneration partnership that is the central empirical focus of the research. The 160 ha South Bank area is characterised by a diverse set of land uses, and is home to a residential population of 9,194[6], as well as international business headquarters such as the riverside Shell Tower, cultural organisations such as the National Theatre, and smaller businesses, shops and offices in and around the UK's busiest station, Waterloo (Bishop's Ward, London Borough of Lambeth, 2011).

[6] Figure is for 2001 and represents an increase of 35.3% from 1991 (ONS, 2001).

Figure 3.1. The South Bank

Source: Author's own graphic

Local land ownership arrangements in the South Bank are complex, with much of the riverside owned privately by a combination of the corporate and cultural institutions described, while two local authorities, the London Boroughs of Lambeth and Southwark share administrative responsibilities for the area (see also chapter 5). Approximately 50,000 people are employed in the South Bank, and the area is now one of London's most visited locations, attracting 19 million tourists per year (SBP, 2006). The thesis details much about the urban fabric of the South Bank and, in chapter 4, outlines the social, cultural, economic and political history of the area in order to contextualise current policy and planning frameworks and contemporary debates surrounding (re)development. As Van Mannen et al (1993: vii) suggest, 'one of the many ways to classify the study of social life is by the kinds of settings in which such study takes place'. This suggests that urban neighbourhoods provide not only a site but also a *topic for* social research (Van Maanen et al, 1993: vii). It is argued that the South Bank is both a suitable site *for* and an object *of* research given that it has been feted as an exemplar of successful partnership-led regeneration by government (see DCMS and DCLG, 2009).

As well as being seen as a model of good practice in regeneration, the South Bank also has a rich and complex development history (see chapter 4). The area is home to the Coin Street community housing development which, following a long-running planning 'battle' between local residents and developers, was created as an alternative, resident-led, model of regeneration (see chapter 4). Tensions over land-use, in what is now widely perceived to be a globally significant cultural, visitor and commercial centre are ongoing, and demonstrate that, even in a 'global city' such as London, struggles over 'the local' remain important and contentious (see Massey, 2005, 2007, see also chapters 4 and 8). In addition, the research shows that, despite the presence of major corporations and cultural institutions such as Shell and the South Bank Centre, the business agenda is far from an all-powerful force in local politics. The South Bank case therefore offers valuable insights into the capacities and capabilities of, but also *limitations to*, the business agenda.

While the South Bank's local business agenda revolves around particular, and often, divergent narratives and imaginations of place, these were united by a shared desire to unlock the latent commercial potential associated with the South Bank's prominent, central London location. This vision, while dominant amongst planners, policymakers and the (emerging) local business agenda, was far from uncontested, and the research draws out

the South Bank's complex development history in demonstrating how past conflicts about local place continue to shape the terrains of debate in urban regeneration today (see chapter 4). A methodological argument is made that understanding the specific histories and geographies of local place-based politics, through the deployment of a range of research methods, is necessary if critical interventions into wider, contemporary, questions about localism, democratic politics and urban governance are to be made.

The case study area was chosen, in large part, due to the presence of South Bank Employers' Group (SBEG). According to the ESRC-CASE studentship application form, SBEG 'has been a national leader in business-led regeneration since its formation in 1994, contributing on a very large scale to the continuing transformation of a key business and tourist area of London that also has a large residential population'. It is suggested that an examination of SBEG's involvement in the regeneration of the South Bank can provide insights into a range of issues including, changing modes of state-business engagement, the negotiation of local (re)development priorities and systems of democratic accountability in relation to urban governance. While SBEG is the core empirical focus of the research, the views of those from the wider South Bank community, such as residents and other local business actors, also feature as part of the study; not least because being aware of others' views of the organisation strengthens the research's claim to understand and position SBEG's role in local regeneration relative to other institutions.

It is argued that singular case studies, while necessarily unique, have an explanatory power that can speak to broader processes and practices. However, this is a viewpoint that is rejected by many, and issues of *abstraction* and *generalisability* in case study research are much debated in the research methods literature. According to Sayer (1992: 250), the 'temptation to over-extend inferences drawn from case studies is strong'. For him, it is inevitable that, from case study research, the 'best that can be produced is a narrative supported by some results of extensive surveys (or fragments thereof), a few intensive 'case studies' and a host of statements about relatively simple constituent elements or events, all informed by abstract theoretical knowledge' (1992: 251).

Sayer's comments point towards a wider epistemological question about the generation of knowledge(s) through research. In this thesis, empirical and theoretical ideas are not treated in isolation, but rather are intertwined in an epistemological approach that Ettlinger (2009: 1019) terms 'imbricated'. The concept of imbrication, as Ettlinger (2009: 1019) explains, seeks to present theory, 'ground it and then interconnect and build upon ideas with ensuing rounds of theories and their exemplification'. This is not a new or especially novel approach and similarly 'grounded' studies are represented, for example, by Marxist methodologies. However, a case study approach, as adopted here, does, nonetheless, necessitate critical reflection, and while for Sayer (1992), the limitations he identifies do not necessarily devalue a case study approach, others such as Cox (1991b) warn of the dangers of what he terms the 'abstractions' employed in mainstream social sciences.

Cox's contention is that, in accounts of the new urban politics (see chapter 2), assumptions made about 'relations of association' are based on 'what appear, or are observed, to go with what' (Cox, 1991b: 269). Cox is not methodologically opposed to the use of localised case studies; indeed his work on the spatialisation of local relations has done much to further understanding of the locally embedded nature of interest-led agendas (see chapter 2). Instead, his call centres on the need to make 'connections between objects rather than on the relations of formal similarity' (Cox, 1991b: 269). Others, from a positivist perspective, adopt a far more critical stance towards case study research arguing that, 'storytelling lacks rigour, lacks a definite logical structure, it is all too easy to verify and virtually impossible to falsify' (Blaug, 1980: 127). For advocates of case study research such as Flyvbjerg (2001: 66), such viewpoints are commonplace and, while 'not directly wrong' are 'so oversimplified as to be grossly misleading'. He suggests that five key 'misunderstandings' characterise much of the methodological debate about case study research (see figure 3.2).

Figure 3.2. Common misunderstandings in case study research

Misunderstanding 1: General, theoretical (context-independent) knowledge is more valuable than concrete, practical (context-dependent) knowledge.

Misunderstanding 2: One cannot generalize on the basis of an individual case; therefore, the study cannot contribute to scientific development.

Misunderstanding 3: The case study is most useful for generating hypotheses; that is, in the first stage of a total research process, while other methods are more suitable for hypotheses testing and theory-building.

Misunderstanding 4: The case study contains a bias towards verification, that is, a tendency to confirm the researcher's preconceived notions.

Misunderstanding 5: It is often difficult to develop general propositions and theories on the basis of specific case studies.

Source: Flyvbjerg (2001: 66-7)

Flyvbjerg (2001: 70) does not suggest how endemic, nor how deeply embedded, these 'misunderstandings' are in the practice of contemporary social science research, and, in explaining their cause, he surely overstates the disjuncture between the 'concrete, practical and context-dependent' knowledge generated by case study research, and the (predominant) Platon view of universal theoretical science which can be 'defended with rational argument and used to explain nature and human actions'. Indeed, Ettlinger's (2009: 1019) observation that 'exceptional circumstances', understood as ''deviations from a norm', `noise', `outliers', or `inconsequential cases'' count, and 'require a conceptual accounting of them' is well-noted within the social sciences which, since the cultural turn, have been more sensitised towards *minority cases or circumstances*. As Ettlinger (2009: 1019) suggests, these are important objects for study because they,

> [M]ay hold clues as to how change may occur – a set of possibilities that may become `scaled up' to eventually represent a majority of cases either as a function of contingent conditions or, alternatively, overt management of change from a critical normative vantage point. But even if there is no `scaling up', dynamics that are different still count, even if they represent only one voice amongst the multitude.

This research is informed by a similar point of view, and its aim is not to create a generalisable sample, but rather to illustrate, through the South Bank example, key issues in contemporary policy-making processes, the creation and rollout of business-led agendas, and the changing nature of local urban governance. As Sayer (1992: 249) suggests, selecting interesting and complex case instances through which to explore these processes does not

preclude their usefulness since, '[i]n some cases the unusual, unrepresentative conjuncture may reveal more about general processes and structures than the normal one'.

For Sayer (1992: 215), debates about the value and applicability of case study research are enmeshed in broader epistemological questions about the aims of social science. He argues that if the 'aims of social science are to construct a coherent description and explanation of the world and hence to represent and perhaps 'mirror' an object external to itself' then case study research is on shaky grounds (Sayer, 1992: 251-2). If however, one takes a different view, as is the case in this research, in which the goal is 'to provide greater knowledge of society as an object or to assist in our emancipation' then the practical insights offered by case study research have much greater value. Flyvbjerg (2001: 166) makes a similar point, suggesting that if one subscribes to the belief that 'social sciences has in the final instance nothing else to offer than concrete, context-dependent knowledge...the case study is especially well-suited to produce this knowledge'.

Flyvbjerg's (2001: 166) contention is informed by a belief, which also underpins this research, that the strength of the social sciences lies not in attempting to emulate the 'natural sciences' by producing cumulative and predictive theory, but in its ability to shed light, often through rich empirical detail, on 'problems that matter to the local, national, and global communities in which we live' through a focus on questions of values and power. It is this level of empirical detail which can enhance our understanding of the post-political, an undertaking which the next section reflects upon.

3.4. Researching (post)politics: Some methodological issues

This research takes up Flyvbjerg's (2001) call and explores, by recourse to the South Bank example, processes of contemporary urban policy-making and the inter-relationships that underpin these processes. As chapters 1 and 2 have shown, in recent years, the dynamics of local economic development have shifted as government has sought alliances with the private sector and other non-state actors in matters of local economic development, regeneration and place shaping. Researchers have responded to these developments by subjecting the business role to scrutiny as part of a wider concern with the democratic accountability of unelected bodies in local politics. As Imrie and Thomas (1995) identify, while there is nothing new about social research 'becoming tangled in...politics' the changing social-political relations associated with policy developments during the 1990s makes the 'phenomena more likely'. Section 3.5 shows that the growth of collaborative or

inter-institutional research, wherein researchers work alongside or in partnership with corporate or third-sector bodies, means Imrie and Thomas's (1995) comments have more relevance than ever.

In exploring questions of urban politics the research adopts an *intensive* approach. This, as Sayer and Morgan (1985: 150) suggest, is one in which 'the primary questions concern how some causal process works out in a particular case or in a limited number of cases'. In contrast, *extensive* research is 'mainly concerned with discovering some of the common properties and general patterns in a population as a whole' (Sayer and Morgan, 1985: 150). Three forms of data collection are employed in this research; participant observation, interviews with key actors, and document analysis. Chapter 4, a historical account of approaches to development in the South Bank is largely based upon the analysis of historical planning and policy documents obtained from archives in local libraries with some supplementary interview data. Chapters 5-7, in contrast, largely draw upon interview and observational data, with additional data derived from the analysis of current or recently published policy and planning documents. The following three sub-sections discuss issues relating to the use of each of these methods of data collection in exploring matters of urban politics, in turn.

3.4.1. Document analysis

As Lees (2004: 101) suggests, following the discursive turn in urban studies, researchers are increasingly 'incorporating the study of language and culture into urban geographical analysis' (see also Bourdieu, 1991, Lefebvre, 1991). For this research, this entailed a close-reading of policy and planning documents which, through, for example, mobilisation of discourses of 'growth' and 'world class place-shaping', have played a role in establishing the form and content of regeneration programmes in the South Bank (see chapters 4, 5 and 6). Lees (2004: 102) distinguishes between two distinct, but interrelated, strands of discourse analysis. The first, from a broadly Marxian political-economy perspective, sees discourse as an 'instrument of hegemony' that is as a 'tool for uncovering certain hegemonic ways of thinking and talking about how things should be done that serve certain vested interests'. Fairclough (2001: 229) terms this 'critical discourse analysis' and suggests it aims to show 'non obvious ways in which language is involved in social relations of power and domination, and in ideology'.

This necessitates a close reading of texts such as policy documents to 'discover particular narrative structures, issue framings and how storylines close off certain lines of thought and action at the expense of others' (Lees, 2004: 102). One example of this is the predominance of the 'world city' discourse which is shown, in this research, to have marginalised alternative, resident-led, conceptions of local place (see chapters 5, 6 and 7). This finding is far from unique, and Fairclough's (2001) analysis of New Labour's mobilisation of discourse, points towards what is termed the 'globalization of discourses' where key words such as 'globalization', 'modernization' and 'flexibility' are used to 'both register real change, and represent real change in particular ways linked to particular perspectives and interests' (see chapter 2).

The second strand of discourse analysis identified by Lees (2004) is rooted in post-structuralism and, in particular, the work of Michel Foucault. While, as Lees (2004: 103) acknowledges, there has been overlap between the two techniques, a post-structuralist approach, in which discourses are held to create their own 'regimes of truth' has not always been as 'empirically rich or sensitive as the first strand, with its careful attention to who said what to whom, where, when and how'. The empirical detail referred to by Lees (2004) is something which this research strives towards, and the following section explains how ethnographic research methods have been deployed, alongside discourse analysis, to achieve this.

3.4.2. Participant observation

As Atkinson and Hammersley (2007) note, there has been a burgeoning of ethnographic studies within the social sciences since the 1980s as part of a broader 'methodological turn'. Ethnography has a far longer history in anthropology, as well in distinct research strands such as the study of work and organisations, where ethnographic research methods have been used to 'examine the taken for granted, but very important, ideas and practices that influence the way lives are lived, and constructed in organizational contexts' (Schwartzman, 1993: 4). As Atkinson and Hammersley (2007: 1) suggest, 'ethnography' is not a label used in an 'entirely standard fashion', and there is considerable overlap between other labels such as 'qualitative inquiry', 'case study' and 'fieldwork', however some discernable features can be identified.

In relation to applied research, ethnography 'usually involves the researcher participating overtly or covertly, in people's daily lives for an extended period of time, watching what happens and listening to what is said' (Atkinson and Hammersley, 2007: 3). This is often supplemented by the conduct of formal or informal interviews and collection of supporting documents, or as Atkinson and Hammersley (2007: 3) put it, 'gathering whatever data are available to throw light on the issues that are the emerging focus of enquiry'.

A sub-strand of ethnography, participant observation, was held to be of value in this research given that it 'provides researchers with a way to examine the cultural knowledge, behaviour, and artifacts that participants share and use to interpret their experiences as a group' (Spradley, 1980). As explained, one aim of the research is to develop an in-depth understanding of the ways in which SBEG operates as an organisation. Organisational studies have long employed ethnographic approaches, and as Sayles (1957: 145), a member of the human relations school of industrial research influential in the United States in the 1930s and 1940s suggests, one reason for this is because,

> [The] observance of group-sanctioned behaviour and attitudes "fills out" the rationally conceived organization. What is on paper an organization becomes a "living, breathing" social organism, with all the intricacies, emotions and contradictions we associate with human relations.

In this research, organisation-based research primarily involved the observation of meetings. These included internal meetings hosted by SBEG staff and members but also those held at other institutions such as local authorities or community centres. These were meetings at which SBEG was either represented or ones at which issues were discussed relating to regeneration and redevelopment that were deemed to be of interest for this research. In total 33 meetings were observed (see appendix 1).

The decision to observe meetings held at SBEG as well at other organisations was taken in order to develop a sense of how the group presents itself, and is perceived, in a range of different institutional settings. The decision to focus on meetings in order to do this reflects the view, as expressed by Schwartzman (1993: 39), that '[a]n anthropology of meetings conceptualizes meetings as communication events that must be examined because they are embedded within a sociocultural setting (an organization, a community, a society) as a constitutive social form.' One aspect of this 'sociocultural setting' that Schwartzman does not refer to is the physical location of the meeting itself. Choosing to hold a meeting in a luxurious riverfront boardroom sends a signal to other attendees about an organisation's

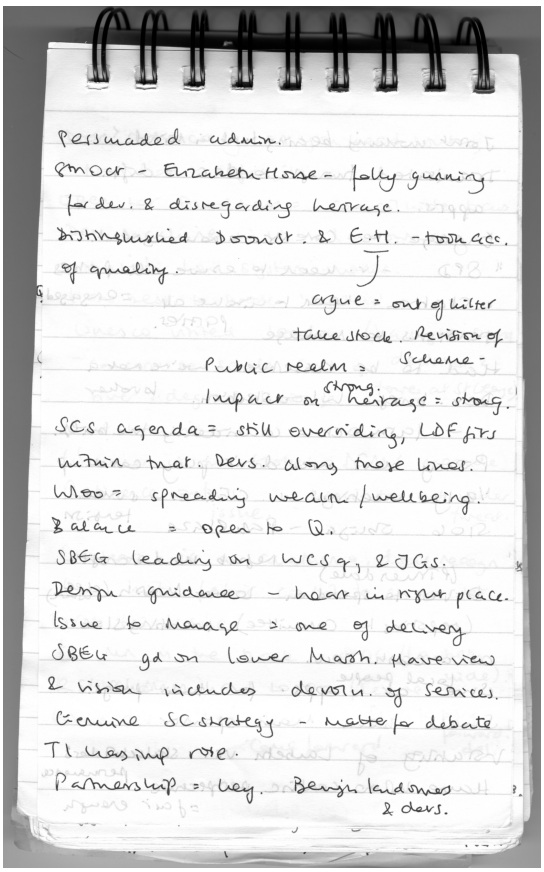
level of resourcing and capacity that can have a direct effect on how it is then perceived and positioned relative to other bodies. As chapter 6 shows, perceived notions of organisational capacity can have a related impact upon organisations' involvement in policy-making and other governance activities (see also chapter 5).

For this research, Schwartzman's (1993: 39) discussion of the value of meeting observation is instructive given that it is underpinned by an,

> [A]ppreciation of the idea that the world does not appear to us as formalized concepts (such as structure or culture, or hierarchy and value), but only in particular routines and gatherings, composed of specific actors (or agents) attempting to press their claims on one another and trying to make sense of what is happening to them.'

This is a sentiment which this research is sympathetic towards, and observations made at meetings have been utilised to understand the particular power networks involved in the formulation and mobilisation of regeneration policies. Notes on meeting observations were written in a research diary that was kept for the duration of the research process and used to note down thoughts, reflections and observations (see figure 3.3).

Figure 3.3. Extract from original research diary



Source: Author's own

Entries were edited and then typed up on returning from the field, an activity that formed an active part of the data gathering process by giving the researcher an overview of key issues and enabling the isolation of themes to follow up in subsequent interviews and through supplementary document analysis. Diary notes are held to constitute data in their own right, and later chapters intersperse interview quotations with these personal reflections. One extract, included below, shows how a research diary was used to draw together the emerging themes of the thesis, but also to reflect upon issues such as how participants' represented themselves, and the atmosphere and impressions that the interview setting itself created.

> The meeting is in a very formal setting, a large committee or council-style room at St Thomas's Hospital. Out of 36 attendees, there are 9 women (including me), and the majority are wearing business suits. The room is so large that no one can hear properly which makes my role somewhat challenging! The new CEO of Network Rail introduces himself to the group and then talks about the importance of the South Bank Partnership. The Partnership, in his words, 'captures the importance of relationships between stakeholders in and around the South Bank'. The South Bank is spoken about as a 'community' and I wonder what is meant by this statement. The Partnership is said to have 'built that ethic'.

The writing of fieldnotes is, as Wolfinger (2002: 85) argues, often presented as a straightforward task; 'Go to a research site, see what happens, then write it down'. However, this underplays the decisions researchers' make in authoring research notes, such as; 'What do they notice? What do they choose to focus their attention upon? What do they subsequently recall? Of what they remember, what do they choose to document in their notes? In what detail?' (Wolfinger, 2002: 86). For Van Maanen (1988: 223-4) the lack of critical attention paid to fieldnotes reflects their status as,

> [G]nomic, shorthand reconstructions of events, observations, and conversations that took place in the field. They are composed well after the fact as inexact notes to oneself and represent simply one of many levels of textualization set off by experience. To disentangle the interpretive procedures at work as one moves across levels is problematic to say the least. . . .Little wonder that fieldnotes are the secret papers of social research.

Van Maanen's (1988) comments bring to the fore some of the ways in which ethnographic data is analysed, and, perhaps more importantly, directs attention towards the framing of research findings. As Atkinson and Hammersley (2007: 85) suggest, this is a particularly pressing concern in relation to ethnography, and the extent to which researchers' decide to adopt an 'overt' or 'covert' role affects the extent to which they impact upon and shape the events being observed. In this research, an overt approach was generally taken; this meant

that I introduced myself at the start of meetings and explained that I would be listening to and making notes based upon the discussions that unfolded.

Indeed, deciding whether to identify myself as a 'PhD researcher from King's College London' or as someone 'working on a piece of research with SBEG', was a key consideration, and is one reflected upon further in section 3.5. At public meetings, where formal introductions were usually not required, a covert approach was appropriate as I could 'join the crowd'. However, it is important to point out that, given the relatively limited number of stakeholders involved in regeneration issues in the South Bank, people often recognised and acknowledged me as someone associated with both King's College London and SBEG. In all cases, I did not play an active part in meetings. However, as Atkinson and Hammersley (2007) note, an observer merely being present may, albeit inadvertently, affect research outcomes, as people may modify or alter their behaviour in response to 'being watched'.

3.4.3. Interviewing

The third method of data collection used in the research was key actor interviewing, and, in total, 52 interviews were conducted over a period from September 2008-December 2009 (see appendix 2 for a full list). The methodological issues surrounding the use of interviews are numerous and have been discussed at length within the methods literature (see for example, Cochrane, 1998, Denzin and Lincoln, 2005, Oakley, 1981, Roulston et al, 2003, Sin, 2003, Valentine, 1997). For the purposes of this chapter, discussion is restricted to an overview of how the interviews were conducted and with whom, how interviews were analysed, and, finally, reflections on the issues associated with interviewing 'elite' actors, a term often used in methodological discussions. Interviews were carried out with representatives from a wide range of organisations including, SBEG members and staff, local authority representatives and ward councillors, central government and regional government actors, local and regional business representative bodies, local small-business owners, and local residents and community representative organisations.

Reflecting these different institutional groupings, four versions of the interview schedule were produced (see appendices 3-7). Interviews were conducted, with only a couple of exceptions, at the interviewee's place of work or organisational headquarters. As Sin (2003: 305) suggests, the interview site can yield important information about 'the way participants construct their individual and social identities', as well as influencing

interviewer-interviewee dynamics. An example of how the physical environment can impact upon an interview is illustrated by this diary extract,

> I am met in the building's foyer by the PA. There is a major redevelopment proposal on the table for the building and you can see why. It's a dated 1960s/70s concrete building and inside it is a maze of dark corridors. There is no meeting room available (or rather, there doesn't seem to be one), so I'm asked to take a seat on an empty desk next to someone busily tapping away on a laptop, which feels rather strange! I (rather awkwardly) try to amuse myself by flicking through my notebook and re-reading the question list, while the interviewee's PA fetches me a tea (which I don't really want, but interview etiquette seems to dictate it's rude to say no!) I hang around for a few more minutes while [the interviewee] finishes off a telephone call.
>
> The PA is very friendly and I don't feel anxious. I've met [the interviewee] before and he seems quite easy-going, and I'm positive it'll be a fairly relaxed interview. The only 'stress-factor' is that I need to get away quite promptly to attend a seminar, so I'm hoping the interview won't go on for too long...
>
> As luck would have it I'm soon whisked into [the interviewee's] office, just off the main communal office where I waited. Again, the set up is a rather strange, I realise that his PA's desk is also in the same, relatively small, office, and that, rather disconcertingly, she'll be sat behind me working away while I conduct the interview! [The interviewee] doesn't mention this, so I assume this is a regular set up, and we get started on the interview...

The above extract illustrates how emotions surrounding the interview process, such as empathy (to accept tea or not) and anxiety (the 'stress factor') can affect the conduct of the interview. All of the interviews conducted for the research were semi-structured in nature which means that, while key topics and questions were drafted out in advance, the interview was allowed to flow in a different direction if participants indicated this was appropriate. This flexible approach also allows the researcher to respond to unanticipated events of the type described in the diary extract above, and some interviews digressed dramatically from the initial question structure. This was not necessarily a concern, since the interviews aimed to create a lively exchange of ideas through what Goode and Hatt (1952: 191) refer to as a 'pseudo-conversation' where discussion is allowed to flow relatively freely, but with interviewees steered towards key topics by the researcher through purposive questioning.

In order to build rapport, the first part of the interview was given over to a discussion of the interviewee's professional background and their institution's core functions and aims. As Aberbach and Rockman (2002: 675) wryly observe, posing 'innocuous questions about the person's background facilitates [conversation]...since people find talking about themselves about as fascinating as any subject they know'. The second portion of the interview

involved gathering participants' views on the meaning of 'regeneration' and 'sustainable community building' as New Labour's flagship spatial planning and regeneration programme. Third, interviewees were asked to reflect on specific examples of regeneration in the South Bank. This usually entailed participants' reflecting on past redevelopment initiatives as well as current issues, and commenting on their organisation's role in steering regeneration priorities and delivering programmes. They were also asked to reflect on the wider inter-organisational networks involved in regenerating the South Bank. Finally, interviewees were invited to reflect on the ways in which the private sector engages in regeneration issues, either from their own perspective, or, if the interviewee was from a non-business background, their experience of working with business-led bodies. It is important to note that these topics were often addressed in different orders and varying levels of detail, depending upon participants' expertise(s), experience(s) and willingness to divulge certain information. To this end, open-ended questions were used to 'give the respondents latitude to articulate fully their responses' and also to give interviewees some influence over the ordering of topics discussed (Aberbach and Rockman, 2002: 674).

According to Aberbach and Rockman (2002: 674), maintaining a degree of flexibility in the conduct of interviews is particularly important when interviewing 'elite' actors such as company directors and senior civil servants since, '[e]lites especially...do not like being put into the straightjacket of close-ended questions'. As chapter 2 has shown, 'elite' is a title often ascribed to those presumed to be 'powerful' (political and business) actors in studies of urban politics. However, despite its ready use, the term has remained 'largely untheorised and unproblematised' (Woods, 1998: 2101, see also Cochrane, 1998). The same is true for methodological discussions of 'elite' interviewing, and, as Leech (2002: 663) notes, while some researchers use 'elite' to 'refer to the socioeconomic position of the respondent...for others it has more to do with how the respondent is treated by the interviewer'. While Leech's comments suggest the multiple uses of the term 'elite' they do not speak to the implicit exclusivity of the term. This is evidenced in the following quotation, where Dexter (2006: 67) implies that 'standardized' and 'elite' interviews are methodologically opposed,

> In standardized interviewing…the investigator defines the question and the problem; he [sic] is only looking for answers within the bounds set by his presuppositions. In elite interviewing, as here defined, however, the investigator is willing, and often eager to let the interviewee teach him (sic) what the problem, the question, the situation, is.

This was not the case in this research, where some of the most informative exchanges, and instances in which the interview process was directed to a minimal degree, were those with community representatives. Despite their supposedly non-'elite' status, these actors had much expertise in issues of regeneration and development and plentiful knowledge to impart. While the use of terms such as 'elite' are problematic for these reasons, it is acknowledged that there are some common issues associated with *accessing* actors such as senior civil servants or corporate directors (see 3.5).

Interviews were recorded using a digital recorder with the interviewee's permission (see 3.5.3), and then transcribed into Microsoft Word documents. These scripts were coded manually using a series of key words, such as 'consensus' and 'leadership', that were derived from the research aims (3.2) as well as from four scoping interviews that helped to determine the core research themes and informed the final interview schedule design. Seen from a social constructivist perspective these activities, and the decisions they are premised upon about what is deemed a 'good' quote, a 'significant' finding', or, indeed, irrelevant or uninteresting, reveal the partial and situated nature of research.

3.5. Practising collaborative research: Reflections on reflexive research

'Reflexivity' is a recurrent theme in this research, and is a word that is often invoked in methodological debates. Calls for a more 'reflexive' or self-aware approach in the study of social life emerged during the 1970s as researchers began to articulate the need to question the impact their own beliefs, assumptions and social and cultural practices had upon research processes and outcomes (see Bryman, 1988). Issues of reflexivity and *positionality*, wherein the researcher reflects upon his or her positioning relative to others in the research process, now represent significant areas of discussion in the social sciences more widely. Feminist research in particular has done much to bring the research process itself under greater scrutiny and, as Roberts (1981: xvi) suggests, has sought to 'critically re-examine socially constructed notions of just what it is that constitutes scholarship and rationality'. Much of this critical feminist enquiry is grounded in what Steier (1991: 1) refers to as a 'constructionist stance' to research which seeks to,

> [Challenge] the traditional objectivist and rationalist views of inquiry, which keep the world, both physical and social, at a distance, as an independently existing universe, and which hold knowledge as reflecting, or even corresponding, to the world.

A key part of this process is reflecting upon the researcher's impact on what constitutes knowledge, or as Rose (1997: 305) puts it, using 'reflexivity as a strategy for marking geographical knowledge as situated'. Developing an awareness of issues of reflexivity in conducting research is particularly acute in the contemporary research environment wherein the emphasis is being placed upon 'collaborative' working with 'non-academic' bodies. Such issues are to the fore in this research which was funded through the ESRC-CASE studentship programme and involved adopting a dual role as someone conducting research *on*, and also working *for*, SBEG.

3.5.1. The CASE programme

As Demeritt and Lees (2005: 127) note, the Co-operative Awards in Science and Engineering (CASE) studentship programme of the UK Research Councils is one example of,

> [W]ider efforts internationally to encourage so-called 'knowledge transfer' and thereby harness publicly supported university research more closely to the goals of national competitiveness, regional economic development and local regeneration.

In this sense, the CASE programme is linked to the broader values of the New Labour project, including partnership and inter-institutional collaboration, the search for best value and the expansion of the 'evidence-base' in policy (Peck, 1999, see also chapter 1). As Demeritt and Lees (2005: 129) identify, the overall aim of the CASE programme is to provide PhD students with the 'transferable skills and applied research experience to make them employable beyond the academy'. The shift towards 'policy-relevant research' within academia in recent years is has been well-noted, with Peck (1999: 131) suggesting that policy research has become the grey 'other' of academic research (see also Allen and Imrie, 2010, Imrie, 2010). The central feature of the CASE programme is the collaboration between a university department and a non-academic body or 'collaborating organization', typically a private business or, less commonly, an NGO, charity, local authority or government department (Macmillan and Scott, 2003: 101, see also Demeritt and Lees, 2005).

The collaborating body, in this instance SBEG, provides a financial contribution to both the research student and university department as a 'top-up' to the research council (here the ESRC) award. Macmillan and Scott (2003), themselves recipients of ESRC-CASE studentships, reflect upon issues of access, confidentiality and ownership associated with their experiences of the programme. Their tripartite analysis is a useful framework for CASE

recipients to reflect upon their research experiences, and some observations on each of these three themes are offered in the following sections.

3.5.2. Accessing research participants

The original grant application to the ESRC makes the responsibilities of the collaborating organization in relation to accessing research participants clear:

> The specific roles of SBEG in the project will be threefold: (a). To provide access to archival materials and records and to key informants that work for the Group; (b). To introduce the student to key actors in London's regeneration and provide opportunities for networking; (c). To provide expert guidance on local regeneration issues and matters relating to SCB at the local level; (d). To give access to dissemination networks.

As this statement shows, the assistance given to CASE students by collaborating organisations in relation to accessing participants is often significant. This assistance can be particularly valuable in organisational studies wherein, as Pugh (1988: 127) suggests, 'sample' is often a 'euphemism for an assorted group of firms who have decided to cooperate'. This research was no different, and SBEG was extremely helpful in providing names of contacts which were followed using individual interview request letters (see appendix 8).

As the interview request letter shows, the decision was taken to approach participants independently, rather than via SBEG, and also to emphasise my status as a 'PhD researcher at King's College London' as opposed to someone 'engaged in collaborative research with SBEG', although both descriptions are equally accurate. As already explained, the relatively small number of bodies involved in regeneration in the South Bank meant that, even though these steps were taken to emphasise my status as an independent researcher, participants had often already met me, for example at SBEG meetings, and made their own judgements about the nature and extent of my association with the collaborating organisation. This meant that distancing myself completely from SBEG was impractical as well as unwise, particularly given the group's willingness to supply contact details for potential participants.

Indeed, the association with SBEG, whether purposively emphasised or not, may have had a positive impact upon my profile, particularly amongst SBEG members who, having been first made aware of the project by staff members, were largely very positively disposed towards participating in the research. As Lee (1993) notes, considering how researchers are

perceived by potential interviewees is particularly important in dealing with 'elites' where it is often the case that the higher the (perceived) status of the researcher, the greater the willingness to grant access.

3.5.3. Anonymity and confidentiality

While my association with SBEG had a largely positive impact upon accessing participants, collaborative working can, as Macmillan and Scott (2003) note, amplify the (multiple) ethical considerations associated with conducting social research. The same is true of organisational studies, the relatively closed nature of which, 'amplify ethical issues in research' (Bulmer, 1988). In this research, issues of anonymity and confidentiality were particularly to the fore given the focus on an urban neighbourhood where, to a large extent, 'everyone knew everyone else'. Protecting the anonymity of participants is a longstanding concern within social research. However, issues of anonymity can be more pressing still in the context of collaborative research where, 'researchers may be discussing or presenting analysis and findings to participants who are quite knowledgeable about the setting and its key 'players'' (Macmillan and Scott, 2003: 104).

This was certainly the case in this research, and two measures were taken to ensure that, as far as is reasonably possible, material used in the final thesis cannot be attributed to individuals. The first involved the use of pseudonyms or basic descriptions of participants' roles such as 'local authority representative', rather than referring to named individuals or even their institutional affiliations. This was made clear in the information sheet and consent form that was given to participants before interviews and which also sets out details of the study's ethical approval (see appendix 9). The second measure involved the drawing up and signing of, a *Memorandum of Understanding* (MOU) between the academic institution (King's College London) and the collaborating organisation (SBEG), and which set out protocol on issues such as confidentiality, intellectual property and publicity (see appendix 10). The aim was to make the responsibilities and expectations of both partners clear.

3.5.4. Questions of ownership

Establishing clear boundaries is, as Macmillan and Scott (2003: 102) identify, especially important in relation to the issue of ownership, which, particularly in collaborative research, 'has a degree of ambiguity'. As they explain while, strictly speaking, the researcher retains ultimate ownership of the research, 'the involvement of other people in

the research design, facilitation and examination of the results render the lines of ownership a little less clear cut than in a non-collaborative research project' (MacMillan and Scott, 2003: 102). Arguably this 'messiness' is not confined to collaborative research and, as Denzin et al (2005: 255) point out, in some sense 'participants are always "doing" research, for they, along with researchers, construct the meanings that are interpreted and turned into "findings"'. One example of the blurred lines of ownership is illustrated by the extract in figure 3.4, taken from a policy document which was co-authored by the researcher as part of a 30-day per year secondment working at SBEG. In producing this document, drafts were emailed back and forth between researcher and SBEG staff, a collaborative process in which the lines of ownership can be unclear.

Figure 3.4. Extract from the South Bank Manifesto

The South Bank manifesto 3 years on: A renewed call for action
Foreword by Kate Hoey MP and Simon Hughes MP

The South Bank Partnership published its Manifesto for Action, 'Under Pressure and On the Edge' in 2006. The Manifesto set out the priorities for action needed to ensure the South Bank remained a sustainable and balanced community in the face of pressures relating to the development and growth of the area.

The Manifesto was a pivotal document in recognising the major changes seen in London's South Bank, and establishing the path for collaborative delivery across the private, public and voluntary sectors. It recognised both the opportunities and challenges raised by the Waterloo area's designation in the 2004 London Plan as an 'Opportunity Area' where tall buildings and intensive development are expected as part of the provision of 15,000 new jobs and 1500 additional homes.

The Manifesto represented a groundbreaking call for the proactive 'management of change' in order to secure the future of the South Bank, and ensure the area contributed to the wider London and national economies.

Working together, the South Bank Partnership, a unique collaboration between the area's major businesses, arts organisations, universities, health and other public agencies, has, with Lambeth and Southwark Councils, Transport for London, the London Development Agency, and local residents represented by their ward councillors and MPs, made significant progress in co-ordinating change and managing some of the tensions associated with this.

Source: SBP (2010: 3)

Potential conflicts over the ownership of documents, such as the Manifesto, were avoided by ensuring that the intended purpose of the publication, report, or indeed research thesis, was established before any work began. SBEG was made aware at the outset, an understanding that was formalised in the MOU, of the need to produce a critical, academic piece of work, and was very sensitive towards this, leaving me to conduct the research independently, but offering advice and input when needed or requested. Macmillan and Scott's (2003) observation that 'ownership' is best conceptualised as a fluid concept which shifts as the project progresses through certain key stages such as data collection and the writing-up process is apt, and highlights the need to update research partners of project progress. To this end, quarterly update meetings were held where the researcher, my two supervisors, and a representative from SBEG came together to review progress and discuss any issues of relevance for the research or inter-institutional relations.

My involvement in authoring SBEG documents, such as the manifesto update, demonstrates the extent of organisational understanding that was accrued over the 3 year research period. This period involved regular projects, mainly authoring policy documents or other publications, which, along with interview, meeting observation and other less-formal interactions with SBEG staff and members, for example at community events or even 'around the office'. This meant that I accrued a detailed understanding of the workings of the organisation and, moreover, an awareness of the 'SBEG way' of doing things that proved invaluable in understanding the organisation, but also facilitated the authoring of documents, such as 3.4, that were sensitised towards, and reflected, the SBEG perspective.

This research project, while first and foremost a piece of critical academic research, also aims to be relevant to non-academic audiences, something that has necessitated forethought about dissemination techniques. To this end, two research workshops have been undertaken during the research period which have brought practitioners, academics (including the researcher), and members and staff based at SBEG, together to discuss issues raised by the research. In addition, an accessible summary of the research findings will be made available to research participants, alongside the full thesis. As Denzin et al (2005: 401) point out, giving feedback is a more or less 'constant process' which should include informing participants 'about any issues that arise about ownership of the research and the way it will be disseminated'. Providing participants with greater ownership over the

research process as a whole has been the aim of some strands of feminist research which have sought to engage participants in the 'joint construction...of polyvocal texts' (Denzin et al, 2005: 904). Similar aims underpin participatory research approaches, although, as Denzin et al (2005: 560) point out, even here, 'issues of power remain as collaborative research does not dissolve competing interests'.

3.6. Conclusion

This chapter has set out the research design adopted in the study, and sought to contribute to some key areas of methodological discussion, specifically, the use of case studies, issues in 'elite' interviewing, and questions of reflexivity in conducting collaborative research. It has shown that, even with careful planning, conducting research is always a 'messy' process, fraught with problems such as confidentiality, access and ownership. Taking a constructivist view of research acknowledges this messiness as a part of the production of context-dependent and partial knowledge(s) that include research data (see Sayer, 1992). This has resonance for the aims and methodologies adopted in social sciences given that, as Law (2004: 2) suggests, social science is unlikely to render things 'clear and definite' given that it attempts to describe things that are 'complex, diffuse and messy'. Indeed, returning to Flyvbjerg's (2001) work, he argues that '[i]f we want to re-enchant and empower social science', or, to take the title of his book, ensure that social science 'matters', the ideals of scientism must be abandoned.

Acknowledging the contingent nature of social research is one way to do this, and involves the researcher reflexively examining his, or her, own impact upon the research process. As this chapter has shown, this might entail reflecting on the choices made in representing oneself as an 'independent' PhD researcher, or as someone working collaboratively with a non-academic partner such as SBEG. Often these decisions are opportunistic and reflect what Homan (1991) calls the 'chameleon-like' behaviour adopted by researchers as a way to maximise research outcomes. This chapter has sought to show that these practicalities or 'messy realities' are not unimportant in shaping the final form of the thesis, and, in fact, reflecting on these contingencies can, as Flyvbjerg (2001) suggest, *strength* the ability of the social sciences to make sense of the complexities of the modern world.

The following chapter takes up Flyvbjerg's (2001) call to develop rich, reflexive analyses of values and power, and introduces the South Bank case study in greater detail. It develops what might be termed a place-based narrative that aims to convey key features of the

area's recent social, historical and political past as a way to contextualise more contemporary debates about regeneration and development that form the focus of chapters 5-7. It also sets out the power dynamics between business actors and residents, relations which have been of central importance in past planning debates, and which, as later parts of the thesis show, remain a key driver, albeit in different guises, of the South Bank's local politics today.

Chapter 4. Imaginations, planning and periodizations: (Re)shaping the South Bank

4.1. Introduction

This chapter introduces the South Bank area in central London, and offers an overview of its development and planning history. It shows how, over the last 100 or so years, the South Bank has been the subject of numerous planning, regeneration and urban (re)development schemes, all of which have revolved around specific, place-based visions that have set out what the area could or *should* be. While the meaning(s) of local place have been (and continue to be) fought over, the chapter shows how, in more recent years, a predominant reading of the South Bank as an under-developed or unattractive space that has failed to capitalise on its proximity to central London, has emerged. This development vision has been propagated, in the main, by planners, politicians and local business people.

In a context of competitively-funded, partnership-led regeneration, the South Bank is regarded by many as a 'best practice' example of inner-urban redevelopment (see chapter 5). However, the chapter shows how this regeneration 'success' story has involved the overcoming of past conflicts on matters of local development, planning and place shaping. The chapter argues that the development history of the South Bank can be best understood as a series of 'periodizations', that is, distinct but interlinked historical periods, through which (dominant) visions or 'rationalities' of local place have emerged. These have helped to determine the South Bank's social, economic and cultural functions and have also shaped priorities for future (re)development. It is suggested that an analysis of these periodizations provides valuable historical context needed to understand current approaches to local planning, place shaping and (re)development. The chapter makes the argument that, in past periods, the wider political context allowed for, and in some cases even positively encouraged, a conflictual development climate. This is no longer the case, and, as later chapters will also show, the consensual approach to regeneration pursued by New Labour and evidenced by local regeneration partnerships, has flattened the terrain of debate in the redevelopment of the South Bank (see chapters 6 and 7, see also Baeten, 2009).

While the contemporary local political landscape, despite being characterised by a more pluralised set of local institutions (see chapter 6), is less 'open' to some of the radical political interventions seen in the past, it does not necessarily follow that, historically, development and planning issues were any more locally-controlled than today. One example of this is the Coin Street campaign, often cited with the planning literature as a rare 'bottom-up' or community development victory. Yet, as the chapter shows, the Coin Street Community Builder's eventual victory was arguably only achieved due to the 'top-down' support of the Greater London Council. Caution is required then, particularly when referring to the 'post-political' condition, in order to avoid the implication that, in the past, politics was more localised, radical and/or more democratic (see also chapter 1).

The remainder of the chapter is divided into five sections. Section 4.2 briefly explains the use of periodizations as a way to understand urban change and sets out the power of the 'urban imaginary' in shaping approaches to development in place (see also chapter 2). The remaining sections each focus on a distinct, yet inter-related, period in the South Bank's development. Section 4.3 shows how the area evolved from a largely undeveloped marshland, to a 19th century centre of light industry, theatrical entertainment and working-class housing. While there was little formalised planning of the area until the early-mid 19th century, imaginations of the area as first a slum, then later in the early 20th century as a largely-redundant residential and industrial centre, helped to shape the emerging rationality that the South Bank area had the potential to house office, civic and national-scale cultural functions. Section 4.4 focuses on the post-war years, a period in which planning was seen as a way to reinvigorate and reinvent communities after the austerity of the war years. The South Bank played a key role in this wider project as the site of the Festival of Britain, the aftermath of which brought the first wave of cultural and commercial offices to the area. Section 4.5 recounts perhaps the most well-known period in the South Bank's history; the Coin Street years. This saw tensions over the meaning of the local played out in what was to become the UK's longest running planning inquiry. The Coin Street years were characterised by a series of disputes between incoming businesses and developers keen to exploit the area's commercial potential, and local residents, whose rallying call of 'homes not offices' became the Coin Street campaign's headline. Finally, section 4.6 draws together the patterns of development seen in each of the three periods, and highlights how past approaches to planning and development have left a series of legacies that continue to shape the boundaries of local politics today.

4.2. Periodizations and the urban imaginary

As Raco (2007c: 22) identifies, many researchers have sought to associate the 'rationalities and practices of governance' with particular historical periods in a bid to situate and theorise contemporary governance arrangements. For Jessop (2004: 2), the main aim of any periodization is to,

> [I]nterpret an otherwise undifferentiated 'flow' of historical time by classifying events and/or processes in terms of the internal affinities and external differences in order to identify successive periods of relative invariance and the transitions between them.

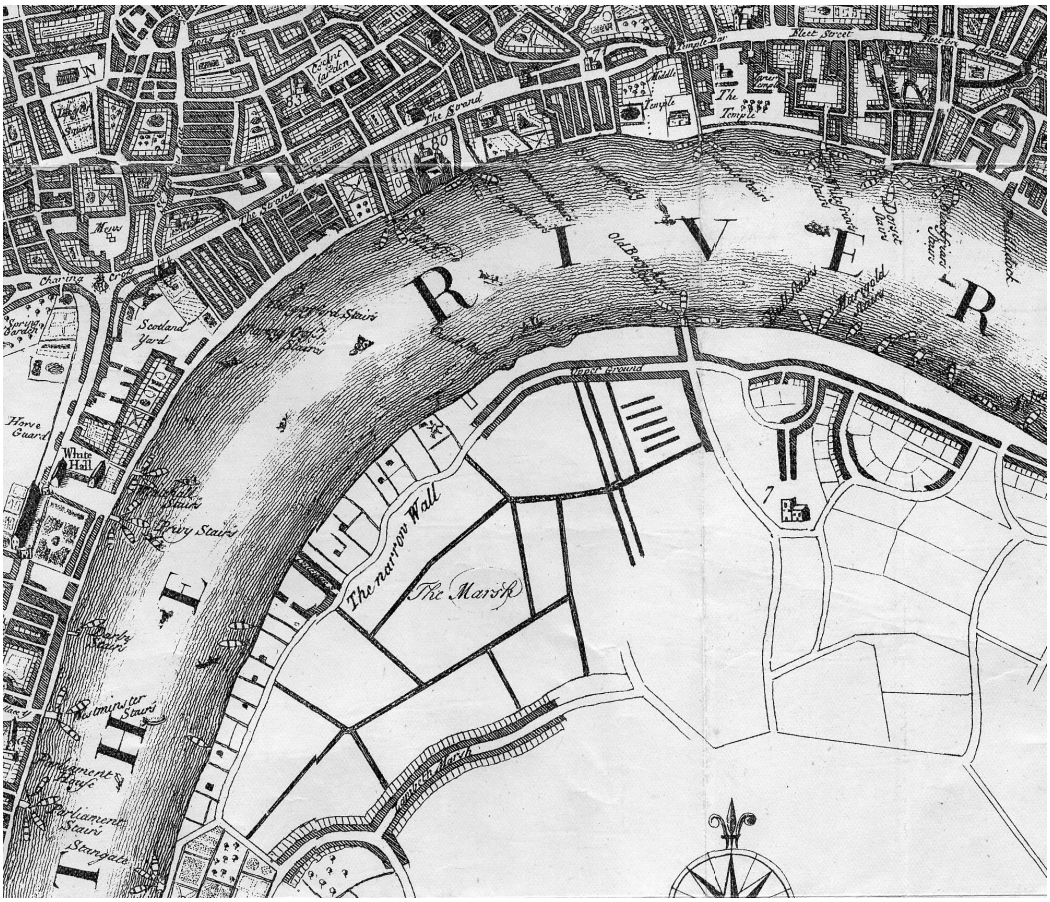
Thus, the notion of periodization, while recognising that historical time can be characterised by distinct periods, is based upon the ontological assumption that there is a 'paradoxical simultaneity of continuity/discontinuity in the flow of historical time' (Jessop, 2004: 2). This is paradoxical, because, 'if nothing ever changed, periodization would be meaningless in the face of the self-identical repetition of eternity', yet, 'if everything changed at random all the time...so that no sequential ordering was discernible, then chaos would render periodization impossible' (Elchardus, 1988: 48). It is argued that the ways in which the South Bank has been imagined by planners and policymakers through the years can be traced through a series of historical periods that have, together, produced a dominant *rationality* that informs approaches to planning and development in the area today.

As Raco (2007c: 25) has suggested, '[d]iscourses and imaginations matter. They play a central part in the identification and definitions of the 'problems' that governments face.' Imaginations are therefore particularly powerful in shaping policy priorities since, '[p]articular diagnoses are made about the 'problems' afflicting identified places and various places are called upon to 'cure them' (Raco, 2007c: 42). Dikeç (2007: 23) makes a similar point, and drawing upon the work of Rancière suggests that, in deploying particular spatial imaginaries, 'urban policy...may be seen as an institutionalized spatial arrangement' or what he refers to as 'the police' (see chapter 1). For Healey (2002: 1777), imaginations of the city are important since they can be, 'mobilised, contested and attached to the strategic governance to 'shape' evolving city futures'. The following three sections illustrate how imaginations of South Bank locale, as expressed by planners, policy-makers, but also local business and community actors, have shaped approaches to development in the area.

4.3. 'A village on a street': The South Bank's pre-war history

Lambeth, the London borough that today, assumes administrative responsibility for the majority of the South Bank and Waterloo area (see 4.3), is recorded in 1062 in a Charter of Edward the Confessor as 'Lambe-hithe', and again in 1086 as 'Lanchei' in the Domesday book (Lambeth Council, undated(a)). While the origins of the name are unclear, it is thought that 'Lambeth' is derived from the word 'lam' meaning mud and 'hyth' meaning a haven or port (Lambeth Council, undated (a)). Lambeth largely consisted of low-lying marshland that was prone to regular flooding which limited the development of the area until the marshes were drained during the 19th century. Efforts were made during the 18th century to make the area more hospitable, and in 1720 the 'Narrow Wall' (seen in figure 4.1), today Belvedere Road and Upper Ground (see figure 3.1), was constructed along the south bank of the river to hold back the Thames and enable river crossings (National Theatre, undated).

Figure 4.1. Senex's Plan of London, Lambeth Marsh, 1720



Source: Credit: © Copyright David Hale / MAPCO 2006-2010

While the South Bank was the most developed part of the wider Lambeth and Southwark area, even this area housed few buildings of note besides Lambeth House (now Lambeth Palace) which has been the Archbishop of Canterbury's London residence since the 13th century (Archbishop of York, undated). The rest of what became the London Borough of Lambeth in 1965 remained largely rural in character until the 19th century. Writing in 1773, John Noorthouck describes Lambeth thus,

> Lambeth, antiently Lambhythe, is a village situated along the Thames, between Southwark and Battersea, extending southward from the east end of Westminster bridge; and chiefly inhabited by glass blowers, potters, fishermen, and watermen. The parish is divided into 4 liberties, and these again are subdivided into 8 precincts, which are thus distinguished. 1. The bishop's, 2. The prince's, 3. Vauxhall, 4. Kennington, 5. Marsh, 6. Wall, 7. Stockwell, 8. The Dean's: the whole circumference of which amounts to about 16½ miles. The only building of any consideration in this village is the palace of the archbishops of Canterbury.[7]

Lambeth and the South Bank's rural character provided a welcome contrast to the over-crowding north of the Thames and, much like today, the riverfront became a fashionable place for Londoners to visit[8]. In 18th century, a pleasure garden called Cuper's Gardens, latterly known as 'Cupid's Garden's' due to its popularity with courting couples, stood on the site of Waterloo Road[9]. The gardens were purchased by Mark Beaufoy in 1762 who opened a vinegar and wine distillery on the site. The site is described by Pennant in his 1791 *Some Account of London*,

> The genial banks of the Thames opposite to our capital, yield almost every species of white wine; and, by a wondrous magic, Messrs. Beaufoy pour forth the materials for the rich Frontiniac, to the more elegant tables … There is a magnificence of business in this ocean of sweets and sours, that cannot fail exciting the greatest admiration.

While the rest of Lambeth parish remained largely rural, boat builders' and timber yards began to grow up along the riverside during the 18th century, following the opening of Westminster Bridge in 1750 (Roberts and Godfrey, 1951a). Prior to this the only way to cross the river from Lambeth was via the Horse Ferry which operated where Lambeth

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[7] The name 'Bishop's Ward' continues to be used to denote the London Borough of Lambeth electoral ward encompassing the majority of the present-day South Bank area (see 4.5).

[8] There are records of King Henry VIII being rowed up and down the Lambeth section of the river in his barge accompanied by drummers and pipers in 1539, of grand firework displays along the bank in 1612, and, after the Restoration of the monarchy in 1660, the Queen and her ladies are recorded as breaking for refreshments on the South Bank while they voyaged along the Thames (Malden, 1912a; see also, Browner, 1994).

[9] The gardens remained open until the 1760s when they were judged to be encouraging questionable moral behaviour, and were closed under the 1753 'Act for Preventing Thefts and Robberies and for Regulating Places of Public Entertainment' (Malden, 1912a; National Theatre, undated).

Bridge now stands (Malden, 1912a). Other forms of industry began to appear in the area, namely glassblowing, potteries, which have been found in Lambeth since the Elizabethan times, along with breweries, tanneries, and soap and candle-makers (Roberts and Godfrey, 1951a; see also, SBEG, 2004). As Roebuck (1979: 131) identifies, the South Bank was ideally placed for such necessary but often unpleasant trades being, 'close to London but sufficiently far away from the main centres on the north bank'.

While the South Bank was more developed than the rest of Lambeth, industry and dwellings remained confined to a small ribbon along the riverfront. This remained the case until the early 19th century, when the drainage of Lambeth Marsh began, though the area continued to remain prone to frequent flooding. The opening of the first Waterloo Bridge in 1817 marked the next phase in the area's development, and connected the South Bank to the rapidly expanding city north of the Thames (Roberts and Godfrey, 1951b).[10] Between 1801 and 1831, as the Industrial Revolution gained momentum, the population of Lambeth more than trebled, and the following 10 years saw it increase still further, growing from 87,856 to 105,883 in 1841 (Malden, 1912b). The population of the South Bank area grew particularly rapidly as poorer workers moved closer to the factories, wharves and warehouses that began to cluster along the Thames. As Charles Booth (1903) remarked in his survey of London life, '[p]overty clings to the water' (cited in Roebuck, 1979: 131).

The early to mid 19th century brought a more formally planned style of development to the South Bank area. Major streets, including The Cut and York Road, were built in the early 1820s. The Lambeth Estate, now part of the 'Roupell Street Conservation Area' (see figure 4.2), was constructed by the gold refiner John Roupell between the 1820s-1840s to house those working in the South Bank's wharves and factories. Conditions in the Estate were cramped, with often 12 or more people to a house, and poor sanitary conditions gave rise to diseases such as cholera which ravaged London in a series of outbreaks from the 1820s onwards. While living conditions were unpleasant, the Lambeth Estate buildings were

[10] Originally called Strand Bridge, during construction an Act was passed changing the name to 'Waterloo Bridge' as "a lasting Record of the brilliant and decisive Victory achieved by His Majesty's Forces in conjunction with those of His Allies, on the Eighteenth Day of *June* One thousand eight hundred and fifteen" (Roberts and Godfrey, 1951b). It seems likely that this symbolic act was instrumental in the adoption of the name 'Waterloo' to refer to the wider South Bank area, though the concept of a 'Waterloo community' was still in its infancy as late as the 1970s.

generally of high quality, as Ian Nairn in his 1966 (no page) guide to the capital enthusiastically attests,

> Here is true architectural purity...nothing but yellow London brick and unselfconscious self respect. Whittlesey Street is...two storeys made into three with a blind attic window concealing a monopitch roof or pantitles...Roupell Street answers with a wavy parapet: the gables traverse, not along the street. On one level there is no finer architectural effect in London.

Figure 4.2. Roupell Street, present day

Source: Author's photograph

It was around this time that the South Bank rekindled its earlier reputation as a space for leisure and entertainment. A series of notable theatres, including the Old Vic, then known as the Royal Coburg Theatre, opened in the 1818, along with dance halls, drinking houses and even a public boxing theatre known as The Ring (Thurston, 2005). Such establishments provided light relief from the cramped, often squalid conditions that the South Bank and Waterloo population experienced. The area gained a reputation for its vibrant, often raucous, nightlife, as this quote from the 1880s society magazine, 'Paul Pry' demonstrates,

> The people of the South Bank are a different race, swayed by different impulses and more readily susceptible of pleasurable emotions. This may, in some measure, arise from the fact that the vast proportion of the population are diggers and delvers and are free from the ennui of the lowgers of the West End of town. Time out of mind, the inhabitants of Lambeth and Southwark have been the great patrons of theatrical and musical entertainment and have supported them with a steadiness and consistency almost miraculous (Undated, quoted in Thurston, 2005).

The commercial heart of the South Bank expanded to support the residential population and historical accounts of the period describe the 'village-like' atmosphere that existed on core streets such as Roupell Street. At its peak in the mid-19th century, Lower Marsh market, today limited to a couple of stalls and the subject of a major regeneration scheme, spanned from Blackfriars Road, along the Cut and across to Westminster Bridge Road (lower-marsh.co.uk).

The arrival of the railways during the 1840s provided the next catalyst for the South Bank's development. Originally planned to be a temporary 'halfway house' extension of the London and Southampton Railway's Nine Elms terminus, Waterloo Station, then known as the Central, was opened in 1848 (Faulkner, 1981). The railways caused considerable disruption to the existing population as tracks were carved into the already densely-packed housing, forcing out residents, many of whom were living in slum-style housing (Roebuck, 1979; Tuckett, 1988, Coin Street Community Builders, undated). The remaining residents, already living in severely overcrowded conditions, were forced to accept the dirty, noisy railways as neighbours (Roebuck, 1979). As H.M. Scantlin (1950: 14) describes,

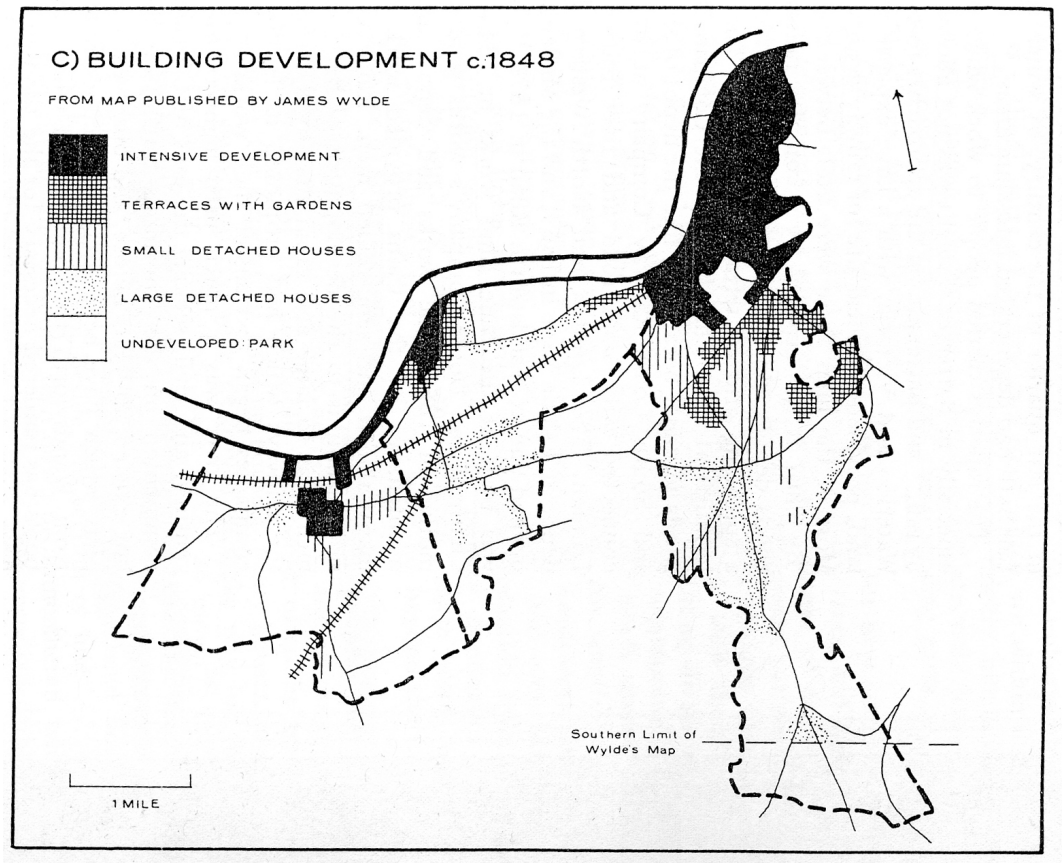
> The decline in amenities of this part of London, and particularly the dirt, noise and smoke of the trains, caused many of the inhabitants who were in a position, gradually, to move away; and though this movement was slow at first, it became most marked in the last quarter of the century, by which time parts of North Lambeth had degenerated into slum areas.

While declining living conditions forced some residents out of the area, commuters, still a relatively recent social phenomena, were heading into the South Bank area in increasing numbers. At this stage they were, in the main, a transient presence, heading in to Waterloo station from parts of Surrey and Kent, and then continuing their journeys in to the City or Westminster. The Commissioners of Waterloo station recognised the importance of servicing this growing community of suburban commuters, and in 1846 noted that the proposed Waterloo extension, 'would give great convenience to the City passengers who use this Line or Railway' (Roebuck, 1979: 121). Meeting the needs of commuters and the

wider working population continues to shape approaches to planning and regeneration in the South Bank area (see chapter 5).

While Lambeth's overall population continued to grow, by 1861 the residential population of the Waterloo area had begun to decline, falling by 4% between 1861-1871, and a further 9.4% between 1881 and 1891 (Roebuck, 1979). While this was in part a result of outmigration to the suburbs, slum clearances and displacement resulting from railway construction, it was also partly due to the expansion of industrial activities on the South Bank. As figure 4.3 shows, by 1848 the South Bank was classified as an area of 'intensive development' (Roebuck, 1979: 125). In fact, as early as 1837, 'the tendency was, in a time of commercial expansion, for land in such areas to become too expensive for low-grade housing and for the construction of profitable wharves and warehouses to drive out people' (Roebuck, 1979: 124). By the mid-1800s wharves and warehouses stretched along the riverbank towards Vauxhall, along with shoe factories, a brewery, distillery, and boat builders who continued to trade until 1877, when the construction of the Albert Embankment blocked access to the river (Roebuck, 1979).

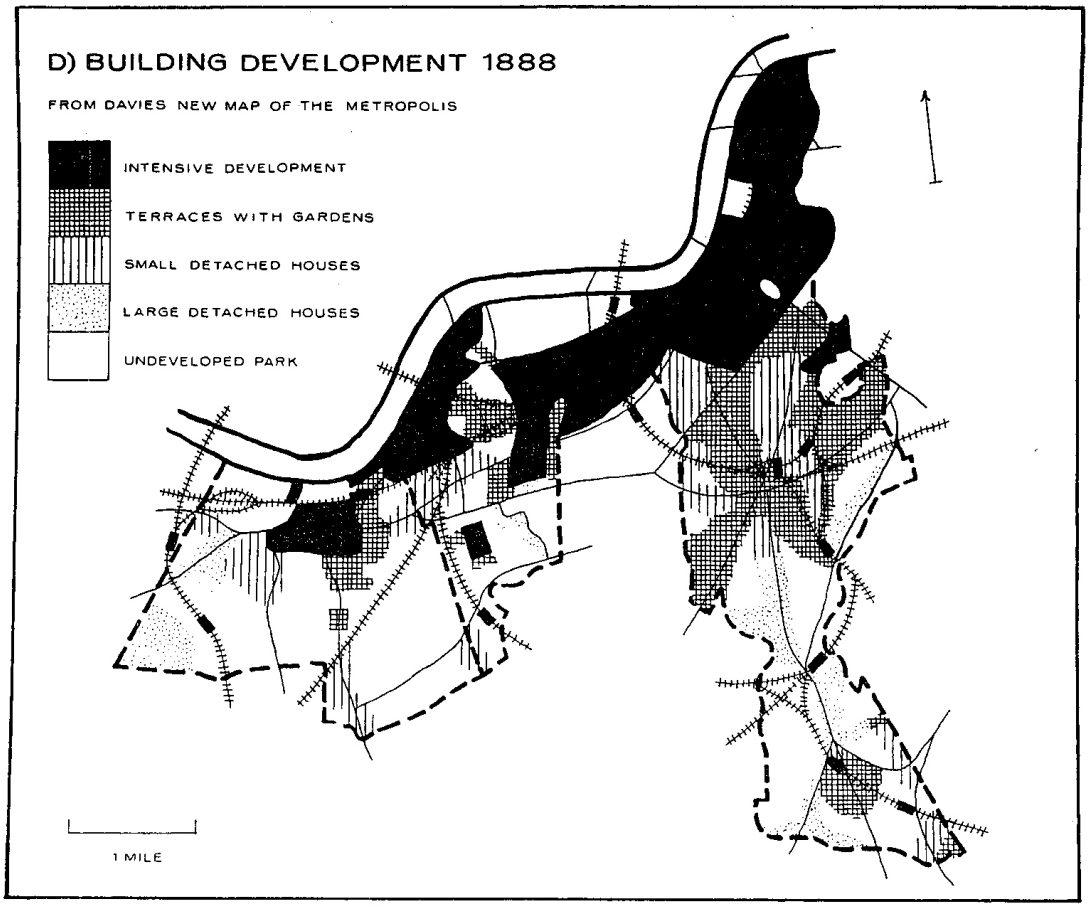
Figure 4.3. Building development, Lambeth, Battersea and Wandsworth 1848



Source: Roebuck (1970: 125)

The clearance of land for the railways, slum clearances, and the continued intensification of development on the South Bank (see figure 4.4) meant that between 1881 and 1891 there was a 12.8% decline in the number of homes in the Waterloo area (Roebuck, 1979).

Figure 4.4. Building development, Lambeth, Battersea and Wandsworth 1888



Source: Roebuck (1970: 127)

The railways continued to expand incrementally throughout the late 1800s and into the 20th century to meet rapidly growing passenger numbers (Faulkner, 1981). Extensions to both the station and railway lines had the effect of severing the riverfront area from the commercial centre on Lower Marsh leading to a confusing and divided public realm that remains a cause for concern today (see chapter 5). Platform extensions were hurriedly added at Waterloo to accommodate new rail lines, resulting in calamitous access and platform arrangements that were satirised in Jerome K. Jerome's *Three Men in a Boat* (Faulkner, 1981). After further slum clearances that continued into the early 20th century, the present Waterloo station opened in 1922 (Marsden, 1981).

It was during the early 20th century, as London's suburbs continued to grow, that the metropolitan borough of Lambeth, formed in 1900, decided to relocate from the old Kennington Town Hall, just south of the South Bank area, to a new, 'more centrally located' building. The new Lambeth Town Hall opened in Brixton 1906, an area that was, by then, a thriving commercial and residential hub (Lambeth Council, undated (b)). This decision proved significant for the South Bank and Waterloo area in re-orientating the political core of the borough and its associated institutions away from the area that had historically been the industrial and residential heart of the Lambeth, and towards the rapidly growing residential centres of Brixton, Streatham and Norwood. This also served to underline the imagination of Waterloo and South Bank as a declining residential area, a perception that fed directly into the infamous Coin Street campaign several decades later, and which also underpins views, voiced today, about Lambeth's Council's 'neglect' of the South Bank area, a claim which is used to both explain and justify the creation of a business-led agenda in local development (see chapter 5).[11]

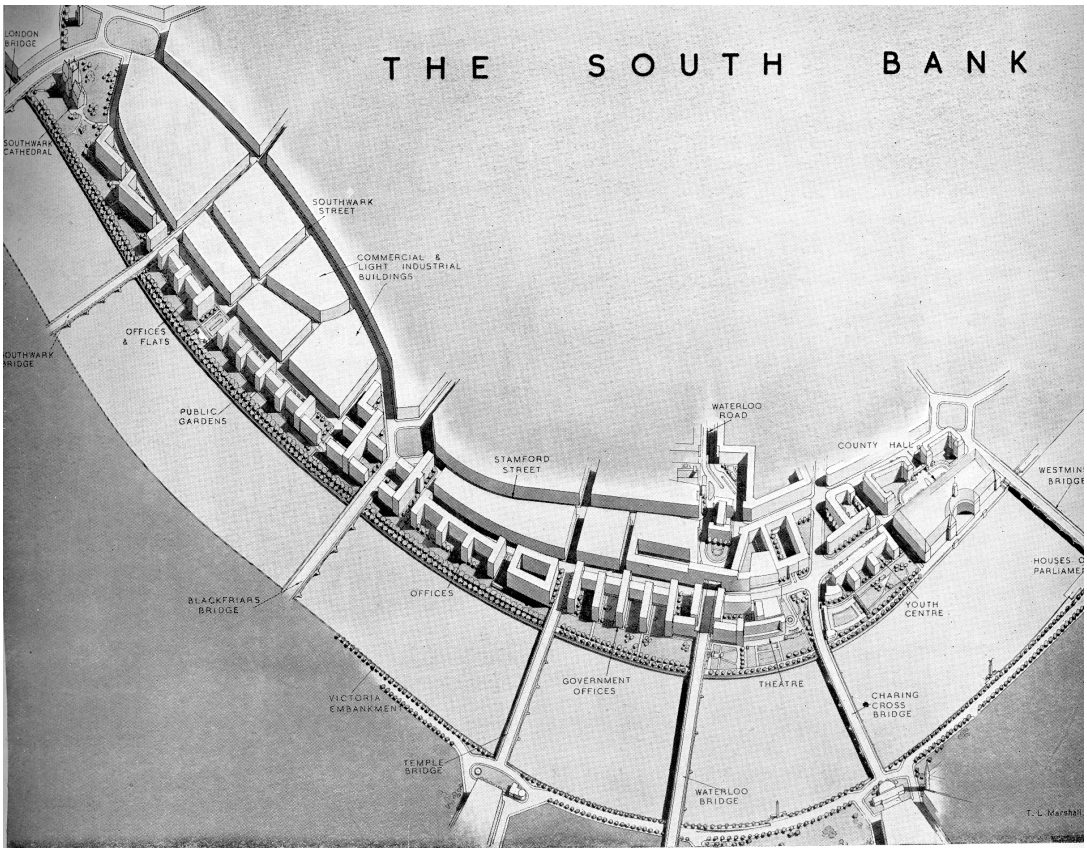
As London's population continued to grow, the mounting land pressures to the north of the river forced planners to look to the far less-developed south to accommodate the city's expansion. Plans emerged in the early 1900s to transform the South Bank area into a new civic centre for London. It was hoped that locating the new County Hall, opened on the South Bank in 1922 on a site of partially reclaimed land adjacent to St Thomas's Hospital, would begin this process and also leverage private investment into the area (Tuckett, 1988). While this approach failed first time around, planners were not discouraged for long, and decided that a more ambitious approach was required. The devastation caused by the Second World War, which saw large parts of the South Bank and Waterloo area destroyed or damaged, presented planners with an opportunity to turn the South Bank into a place more befitting of its central London location. The chapter now turns to the post-war planning of the South Bank, which was a pivotal period in determining the area's form and function today. It was around this time that a formal planning rationality for the South Bank area was established.

11. The perception of some interviewees is that Lambeth Council assigns a lower priority to meeting the needs of the South Bank area's small residential population, in comparison to those in the larger, residential areas in the south of the borough. These areas, it is felt, are of greater political significance for the Council since they contain many more voting members of the public. This is an argument made frequently by members of the South Bank's business community (see chapter 5).

4.4. 'A Festival for Britain': Post-war planning and the South Bank

In the 1943 *County of London Plan*, planners Patrick Abercrombie and J.H. Forshaw dedicated a chapter of the plan to London's riverfront and, specifically, the South Bank area. The South Bank's 'dreary industrial scene, with its many damaged buildings' they argued, 'calls for drastic action' (Abercrombie and Forshaw, 1943: 126). The UK was still at war when the plan was published and it is therefore not surprising that nationalistic language abounds. There is an urgent need to plan, Abercrombie and Forshaw (1943: iii) argue, for 'one the greatest cities the world has ever known; for the capital of an Empire; for the meeting place of a commonwealth of Nations'. Abercrombie and Forshaw's plans for the South Bank area were dramatic in both scale and aesthetic (see figure 4.5).

Figure 4.5. Plans for the South Bank's redevelopment, 1943



Source: Abercrombie and Forshaw (1943: 130)

For Rees and Lambert (1985: 67), while plans such as Abercrombie and Forshaw's were imbued with a modernist architectural aesthetic, the 1940s post-war town planning movement was in fact based upon a 'quintessentially *Victorian* vision of the connectedness of the physical environment, the health of the populace and the smooth future development of society' (emphasis in original). For Hall et al (1973: 41-42) this is

paradoxical; 'planning, when it came to effective power in England' he argues, 'was working with ideas that were over 45 years old'. Modernism, in contrast, was emerging as an ideologically powerful but controversial movement which emphasised the use of new technology and materials and a pared-down, but often imposingly large-scale, functional aesthetic (see Imrie and Street, 2011). Rees and Lambert (1985: 67) suggest that despite the seemingly progressive nature of many post-war town and country plans of this era, planners 'should not be viewed as...radicals'. Instead, Rees and Lambert (1985: 67) argue, the town planning movement embodied an, 'almost moral (and to present-day observers distinctly *un*progressive) concern with the eugenic properties of Britain's towns and cities'. Abercrombie and Forshaw's *County Plan* purported to take a 'rational approach' to the South Bank's future, arguing the need to dispense with '[s]entiments of tradition' and the last vestiges of the area's industrial past (Abercrombie and Forshaw, 1943: 128). As they suggest, 'if the economic base has disappeared, [it can] hardly justify the continuance of the use for wharves and warehouses of the entire river front as far as Blackfriars Bridge on the north and the County Hall on the south' (Abercrombie and Forshaw, 1943: 128).

Abercrombie and Forshaw's (1943: 129) analysis of the South Bank centred upon a comparison of the South Bank and northern banks of the Thames, in which they claim,

> It is one of the great anomalies of the capital that while the river, from Westminster eastwards, is lined on the north side with magnificent buildings and possesses a spacious and attractive embankment road, the corresponding south bank, excepting St. Thomas's Hospital and the County Hall, should present a depressing, semi-derelict appearance, lacking any sense of that dignity and order appropriate to its location at the centre of London and fronting on to the great waterway.

This ideological positioning of the South Bank as 'secondary' or 'inferior' to the north of the city continues to shape how the area is perceived, and, subsequently, approaches to planning and development in the area (see chapter 5). The *County Plan* presents the damage the area sustained during the war as an ideal opportunity to remodel the South Bank, 'bringing it into accord with the north, so that the two, in association, might be worthy of their superb position' (Abercrombie and Forshaw, 1943: 130). The Plan is characteristically both extensive and comprehensive in scope, reflecting the optimism and ambition within the planning profession at this time. The South Bank is to be,

> …cleared of its encumbrances...equipped with a continuous strip of grass and a wide esplanade...associated with the County Hall, the river and the buildings on the north bank...extending on the front as far as London Bridge and inland to York Road, Stamford Street and Southwark (Abercrombie and Forshaw, 1943: 128).

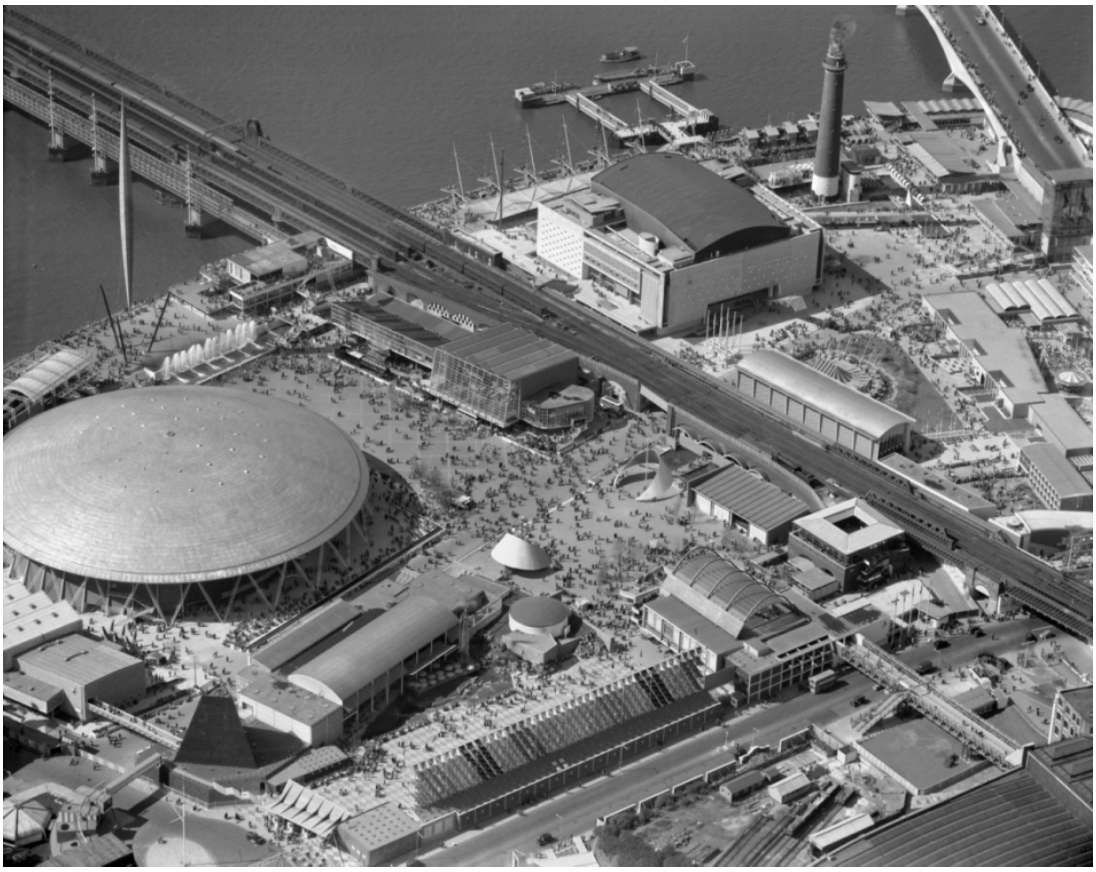
Improving the connections between the north and South Banks is a central aim of the Plan, since the '[l]ack of this access in the past has been the chief deterrent to redevelopment on the southern bank' (Abercrombie and Forshaw, 1943: 131). In a presentient statement, Abercrombie and Forshaw (1943: 131) suggested the South Bank's redevelopment,

> [M]ight well include a great cultural centre, embracing, amongst other features, a modern theatre, a large concert hall and the headquarters of various organisations. It might accommodate, too, a number of blocks of offices with, at the eastern extremity, tall blocks of flats and other buildings.

Abercrombie and Forshaw (1943: 131) were optimistic about the prospect of delivering their vision, arguing that 'the possibilities outlined above are not remote and fanciful' and anticipating, given the comprehensive nature of the scheme, 'a lively response on the part of the public in general, and of prospective developers in particular'. They were certainly correct about the strength of the public's reaction, though it was not perhaps as positive as they might have hoped. As the next section demonstrates, the South Bank community's growing sense of unease about plans for the area's development gave rise to one of the UK's longest and best-known community land battles, though this was still another 30 or so years from now. Convincing prospective developers of the area's commercial potential was to take even more time.

Abercrombie's and Forshaw's *County Plan* laid the foundations for a dramatic set of changes that were to reshape the South Bank area's form and function over the next 50 years, though this was to be an incremental, and not uncontested, process. The Festival of Britain, held during the summer of 1951 on the centenary of the Exhibition of Britain, was the next significant episode in the creation of the South Bank's contemporary identity as a cultural and entertainment centre. Designed to mark the end of the austerity of the war years, the Festival was an, 'unprecedented extravaganza, filled with new technology, art, design and colour' (Mullins, 2007: no page). The specially constructed buildings on the South Bank were the centrepiece of spectacle, and Victorian warehouses and railway sidings were cleared away to build a new concert hall, the Royal Festival Hall, the Dome of Discovery and the Skylon Tower (see figure 4.6).

Figure 4.6. The Festival of Britain site, 1951



Source: Royal Photographic Society collection at the National Media Museum/Science & Society Picture Library.

Between May and September 1951, over 8.5 million people visited the South Bank site (Mullins, 2007), giving the area a national profile that was perhaps, more befitting of its 'superb position' within London. However, the effects of the Festival were largely temporary, and after the Festival closed, little but the Festival Hall itself remained. As Mullins (2007: no page) describes,

> The flags were taken down, and the fountains switched off. One by one the pavilions were dismantled until the Royal Festival Hall stood alone. Even the temporary pedestrian Bailey bridge that linked the site to the north bank was taken away. The south bank's proximity to central London was forgotten and the [Royal Festival] Hall had to fight to survive.

It was to be another 50 years before the South Bank was to regain its position as a national cultural centre, when the opening of the London Eye in 2000 sealed the area's reputation as one of the UK's most popular visitor attractions (see chapter 5). While the post-war planners' narrative was one of renewal and recreation, there was also a parallel, yet largely

unvoiced, narrative of loss and community dissolution at this time. As an interviewee involved in community work in the South Bank area in the early 1970s recounted,

> "It was very much a largely, but not exclusively, working class community, grouped around industrial [buildings], post-war, after a hell of a lot of bomb damage...most of the industry went, [and]most of the jobs went. And, if you like, the direct causality of what might have been arguably a sustainable community and people living near their work... that was all taken away. The first major improvement was the Festival of Britain, which swept away a lot of the bomb damage but also swept away...the great big brewery that was there, all sorts of things where people had been working".

Demolishing the remnants of the South Bank's industrial past not only meant job losses for borough residents (see figure 4.7), but also produced a new and very different physical landscape. As an interviewee recounted, this was not something welcomed by all,

> "Lots of the landscape that a lot of local working class people identified [was destroyed]. Well, at a national level this was a new start, this was a statement of hope for Britain, but at a local level, and you often get this, don't you, at a local level there's tremendous resistance...I think the Festival Hall [is] a fabulous building, but at the time a lot of the local people quite resented this incursion into their area".

Planning at this time was ambitious, fearless, and, with the benefit of hindsight, often misguided. For Essex and Brayshay (2007: 417), the 'lofty, visionary ideals' that characterised post-war plans were often not realized, instead being subject to compromise and appropriation by elite interests (see also Rees and Lambert, 1985). However, while plans were often not fully implemented, for Baeten (2000: 293) the impacts of what he terms 'the hyperactive geography of post-war capitalism' upon the inner-city were nonetheless profound, laying the foundations for the revival of urban regeneration policies seen in Britain in the late 1960s.

In London these policies were brought together in the 1969 *Greater London Development Plan* (GLDP) published by the recently formed regional governing body, the Greater London Council (GLC). The Plan contained a series of strategic policies and proposals for the future development of London. Reflecting the universalising tendencies of 1960s planning that have since been roundly criticised, the plan was wide-ranging but lacking in detail, addressing issues such as 'population, housing, employment, roads, transportation, areas for comprehensive development and other matters of strategic significance' (Hansard parliamentary records, 1969). Parliamentary records show the plan was 'controversial', attracting over 20,000 objections. Planning professionals and commentators were also critical of the Plan, though their criticisms centred upon the Plan's 'lack of specific operational aims' and 'lack of vision' (TCPA, 1970: 13). The planning theorist Peter Hall was

especially dismissive labelling it, 'flat, unimaginative, unoriginal, unmemorable' (Hall, 1969: 276).

While the GLDP was intended to be 'essentially a conceptual plan' (GLC, 1969: 9), its impact on the South Bank area was nonetheless significant. The Plan was instrumental in establishing the rationale that the South Bank was a suitable site for office developments, identifying the area as a, 'preferred location' for 'overspill' offices from the increasingly pressurised City and West End (GLC, 1969; see also Baeten, 2000, Brindley, 2000, Brindley et al, 1996). It also, strongly echoed Abercrombie and Forshaw's analysis of the area more than 20 years earlier, suggesting,

> [T]he south bank area in the loop of the Thames, comprising northern parts of Lambeth and Southwark which has not hitherto played the role which it could do in providing for the central area activities, should be planned to do more in that respect (GLC, 1969: 38).

Indeed, a few pioneering firms, pushed by rising rental rates and shortages of space seen in the City and West End, had already begun to locate their offices on the South Bank. Shell began construction on its international headquarters, Shell Centre, in 1957, as part of the London County Council's (LCC) *Comprehensive Development Scheme* for the area. Opened in 1963, the Centre originally consisted of two separate buildings, 'Upstream' and 'Downstream', that were contained within a 7.5 acre site of land cleared for the Festival of Britain. At 27 storeys, the 'Upstream' was then London's tallest building. While the Downstream building was sold during the 1990s, the remaining Shell building remains a commanding presence on the South Bank.[12] While few other office developments follow Shell's lead until the 1980s, the Shell Centre sets a precedent for tall buildings and also marked the area out as, potentially, a major commercial centre, landuse functions that are enshrined in more recent policy documents, such as the Mayor's (2004) *London Plan* (see chapters 5 and 6).

While the South Bank's economic promise became more widely noted, the area's residential population continued to decline. Between 1961 and 1971 the population of Bishop's Ward fell from 16,435 to 11,560, a decline of almost 30% (London Borough of Lambeth, 1975a). This was accompanied by a dramatic decrease in the number of private

[12] These early 'pioneers' experienced a series of problems when they arrived in the area. Not least, employers such as IBM and Shell had difficulties in retaining and attracting staff who were unimpressed by the lack of facilities for office workers, and the unkempt and uninviting public realm. These issues were core to the formation of South Bank Employer's Group (SBEG) (see chapter 5).

rental properties. Across the borough of Lambeth, around 14,000 homes were lost in this period (London Borough of Lambeth, 1977a). This was particularly significant for the South Bank and Waterloo area as large parts of the housing stock, such as the Roupell Street estate, were privately rented. Working class families who had leased the same properties for generations were forced out, as landlords sold properties or demanded greatly increased rental rates (Thurston, 2005). While housing estates such as those owned by the Church Commissioners, a religious housing charity, the GLC, and Lambeth and Southwark Councils remained into the 21st century, it was the context of a dwindling residential population, combined with mounting political pressure to provide more land to sate the commercial demands of the City and West End, that gave rise to one of the longest and best-known community-planning debates of recent years, the so-called, 'Battle for Coin Street'.

4.5. 'Homes not offices': The Coin Street years

The late 1960s and early 1970s saw the emergence of more inclusive and community-focussed planning processes that placed far greater emphasis on participation and consultation (see Healey, 1997). The *Skeffington Report*, published in 1969, made a series of recommendations about involving the public in planning, and influenced subsequent legislation such as the 1971 *Town and Country Planning Act.* The Act, which placed the onus on local authorities to consult with local residents, was to prove instrumental in determining the direction of development in the South Bank area in the following two decades (see Brindley, 2000, Baeten, 2000). As Elkin (1974: 186) notes, within the wider London context, by the late 1960s, 'the political dimensions of planning were becoming more important'. Land-use decisions were 'increasingly seen to involve questions of social advantage to particular groups which needed to be resolved as well as the achievement of 'planning' goals' (Elkin, 1974: 186). This 'pro-community' planning context was also to prove instrumental in determining the eventual fate of the Coin Street site.

As the previous section has demonstrated, the 1960s and early 1970s saw a dramatic set of economic and social changes in the South Bank area, which contributed to a sense of alienation amongst the declining residential population. Recognising an opportunity to ensure local residents got a greater say in planning and development issues, an embryonic community planning movement took root in the South Bank during the early 1970s. A planning inquiry into the redevelopment of a neighbourhood playground drew residents from the South Bank and Waterloo together, and, after a brief campaign (and much to the

residents' surprise) the proposal was thrown out (Tuckett, 1988). Encouraged by this success, and acutely aware of the growing development pressures weighing on the area, in 1972 a community planning group, *Waterloo Community Development Group* (WCDG) was established by a group of local residents. The group recognised the need to inform the community about planning policies, and the impacts they were likely to have upon the area, and to ensure the community's views were heard in the planning enquiries and consultations that were occurring with increasing frequency. WCDG were also united by a shared concern that the residential population, along with the services and facilities needed to support it, were under threat from the influx of office developments to the area (Tuckett, 1988).

During this time, in addition to new office developments, cultural institutions also began to open alongside the Royal Festival Hall, helping to realise, at least in part, Abercrombie and Forshaw's vision for the area. The Denys Lasdun designed National Theatre (NT) opened in 1976. Like many of the offices that had moved into the area, the NT was of a modernist architectural style. While Lasdun won the Royal Institute of British Architect's (RIBA) gold medal for the building in 1977, many considered it stark and imposing. For the local community, the dramatic scale and design of these new buildings only added to their growing sense of alienation.[13] While institutions like the NT purported to be for the benefit of the wider community as opposed to the traditional theatre-going classes[14], the South Bank's residents were largely unconvinced[15]. As an interviewee recalled,

> "[T]here was tremendous resentment from local residents who saw their local facilities, their local landscape being changed by these things. I remember there was a huge campaign when they built the National Theatre. So this for Britain was a major national prestigious project, where better to put it than the heart of London, right on the South Bank, you know... And clearly it was going to happen but there was a very strong local campaign, which genuinely thought they might be able to influence and stop it happening, because they didn't want those sorts of iconic national cultural things being deposited in their community".

[13] This was compounded by the orientation of the buildings. In facing the river, they were perceived to be turning their backs on the community, an observation made by several interviewees.

[14] As an early supporter of the development of a 'National Theatre' for Britain declared, 'It must not even have the air of appealing to a specially literary and cultured class. It must be visibly and unmistakably a popular institution, making a large appeal to the whole community…It will be seen that the Theatre we propose would be a National Theatre in this sense, that it would be from the first conditionally – and, in the event of success, would become absolutely – the property of the nation' (Archer and Granville Barker, 1904).

[15] A 1975 Lambeth Council report also supports the view that the cultural institutions were aimed at a national, rather than local audience. The report claims that '[e]xpenditure on arts is channelled mainly into a small number of high quality facilities intended to be of national rather than local significance' (London Borough of Lambeth, 1975c: 4).

While residents did not succeed in stopping the construction of the National Theatre, WCDG became a well-supported group, and began to develop its own planning strategy for the South Bank and Waterloo area. This centred on a call for 'homes not offices' and drew upon the concepts, then relatively new to planning, of 'mixed use' and a 'balance' of economic and community functions (Tuckett, 1988). As an interviewee involved in the Coin Street campaign recalled,

> "Very much it was felt that there was an imbalance between the interests of business, and at that time we didn't really distinguish between business...It was them...And then it was us as local residents".

First, however, residents needed to be persuaded that they had a common agenda. The residential population had been undergoing change in recent years. Private landlords that had leased houses in Roupell Street and neighbouring streets to the same families for generations had begun to sell on their properties. As a local community worker at the time recalled,

> "[T]he area started to change, become more attractive, [people realised] what an amazing, quite convenient location it was, and so you started to get MPs buying a pied-à-terre, because you could just literally walk across the river to the Houses of Parliament, and lots of other middle class families buying in...those sorts of middle class professionals who've...colonised the area".

In an important sense, the Coin Street campaign provided an opportunity for 'existing' and these new 'incoming' residents to come together and fight a 'common enemy'. As an interviewee recounted, this required re-building a sense of community that had been lost in recent years,

> "[O]f course there wasn't, initially, even a concept of Waterloo or South Bank as being a community, I mean people talked about living in North Lambeth, North Southwark, maybe Bermondsey, it depended...So part of the whole community building that went on during the 1970s was sort of persuading people that they, collectively, and I'm talking about amongst the residents, had shared interests".

The professional skills of these newly-arrived residents, who were employed as architects, engineers, planners and community workers, proved pivotal to the Coin Street campaign (Tuckett, 1988; Brindley et al, 1996). As an interviewee described, over time, "this sort of solidarity of the community and this vision for the future sort of began taking place". This vision rejected the notion of the South Bank as a 'suitable place' for office development, and instead called for more housing in the area to reverse the declining population and prevent the loss of community services and amenities. Once this 'homes not offices' vision had been established, Waterloo residents utilised Lambeth planning department's fledgling

public participation activities to voice their concerns about the area. A 1977 report of a Lambeth planning public workshop states, 'In Waterloo it was thought that families were needed back into the area to relieve some of the problems such as loss of local shops' (London Borough of Lambeth, 1977a: 7). The report also records concerns about processes of gentrification, then a relatively new concept, stating,

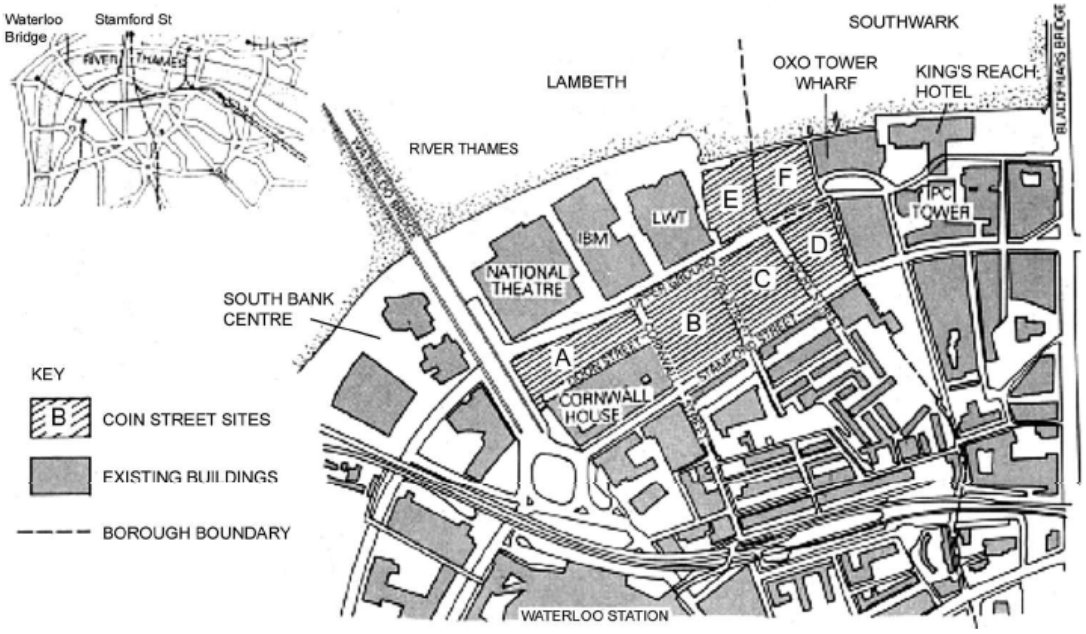
> In Waterloo it was thought that flats and houses were sold at prices so high that people who were born in the area would probably have to move out to buy their own homes. This causes higher income families to move in (London Borough of Lambeth, 1977a: 7).

WCDG's 'houses not offices' rallying call is also referenced in the report which records residents as demanding that 'emphasis ought to be given to housing provision instead of office development',

> It was argued that there are too many Central Area uses around Waterloo and what is needed are jobs for the people who live in the area. There is need for stricter control over office development (London Borough of Lambeth, 1977a: 8)

In addition to engaging with Lambeth through planning consultations, WCDG also made a name for itself drawing upon its residents' professional skills to conduct local surveys, gathering data on issues such as land use and retail provision (Tuckett, 1988). WCDG began to produce its own plans for the area using this date and which centred upon increasing the provision of family housing. The Coin Street site, a largely vacant plot of land adjacent to the National Theatre (see figure 4.7), formed a key part of these plans as it was considered to be the only site large enough to accommodate the number of homes needed to reverse the area's population decline (Tuckett, 1988).

Figure 4.7. The Coin Street sites



Source: Brindley (2000: 364)

WCDG's plans were of high quality and were taken seriously by the authorities, namely Lambeth Council, many of whose officers were sympathetic to the residents' plight (Tuckett, 1988). Lambeth Council was infamously left-leaning at this time, although this did not mean that there were not conflicts between the Council and community, particularly over its housing redevelopment programmes (see Jackson, 1975). Since the London Borough of Lambeth's formation in 1965 under the 1963 *London Government Act*, which also laid the foundations for the formation of the GLC, Lambeth Council had been under almost-continual Labour control (Jackson, 1975).

A 1975 Lambeth report recognised some the benefits that 'the development process in a 'laissez-faire' economy' could bring to the area, including 'an increase in opportunities for white collar employment and some of the poorer paid occupations such as office cleaning and maintenance', 'increases in rate revenue' and 'the planning gains such as the stimulation of outworn areas through redevelopment, housing provisions and leisure facilities which can be negotiated by local authorities when granting planning permissions' (London Borough of Lambeth, 1975b: 58). While the potential for further office development was not ruled out, the same report also warns of the 'numerous...dangers' associated with a growth in office development, including rising land values, residential displacement, and increased pressure on transport systems (London Borough of Lambeth, 1975b: 58).

As Brindley et al (1996) note, while London-wide plans have long sought to exploit the South Bank's commercial development potential, there remained few speculative office developments in the area at this time. Even at the peak of the property boom in the early 1970s there remained little interest in the South Bank from developers, with one exception being the granting of permission for a hotel on the site behind the National Theatre in 1971 to Heron Corporation (Campbell and Fainstein, 2003). In the following years, this limited interest was dampened once more by the fallout of the Oil Crisis of 1973-74 which saw speculative development across London all but halted, and office vacancy rates increase (Brindley et al, 1996).

The sluggish economic context, combined with Lambeth Council's ambivalent attitude towards speculative office development, provided a context for some of WCDG's concerns to be incorporated into Lambeth's *Waterloo Draft Planning Strategy* (1975d). The WDPS, which later became the heavily consulted *Waterloo District Plan,* adopted by the Borough in 1977 (1977b), laid out three scenarios for the South Bank and Waterloo area; high-density office development with community benefits negotiated through planning gain, public housing developments to serve local needs, or a combination of the two (Brindley, et al, 1996; see also Brindley, 2000, 2003, Tuckett, 1988). WCDG held a series of meetings with the GLC which had itself been under Labour control since 1973. This culminated in the GLC's 1975 report, *The Future of the South Bank,* which reflected much of the pro-housing content of Lambeth's *District Plan*. Having recently broken off negotiations with Heron Corporation, in February 1977 the GLC granted scheme approval for 200 homes on the parts of the Coin Street site under its ownership.

However, later that year, the Conservative party assumed control of the GLC with an explicitly pro-office development policy (Brindley et al, 1996). An (albeit brief) boom in London's property market once more stirred the interest of developers Heron Corporation who, this time in partnership with the Vestey Company, lodged a planning application for a 140m hotel and office development. As Brindley et al (1996) note, support for the application also came, less predictably, from the minority Labour government who, in August 1978, confirmed the statutory status of the *Waterloo District Plan*, while simultaneously granting speculative development permits to Vestey and Heron. The South Bank and Waterloo community however, were largely united in opposition to the plans, and began to steel themselves for another fight, this time under the guise of the Coin Street

Action Group (CSAG), which had formed a year earlier in 1977. As Iain Tuckett (1988: 252), a key member of the group recalled,

> The history of involvement had produced a new perspective: "they" were trying to steal "our land", frustrate "our plans" and destroy "our community"! By the time we set up the Coin Street Action Group in 1977 we had an identity, an "alternative" vision supported by local consensus, self confidence from past successes, and a network of personal and organisational contacts.

Mobilising the support of personal contacts, particularly political allies at the GLC, Lambeth Council, and members of the Southwark Development Group (who were campaigning on similar issues in the neighbouring borough), was to prove critical to CSAG's eventual success (Tuckett, 1988). After receiving assistance from one of the GLC's architects, plus local lawyers and planners, CSAG began preparing comprehensive plans for 360 low rise dwellings, a riverside walk and park, shops and other facilities on the eight Coin Street sites (Brindley et al, 1996). Meanwhile, Lambeth had adopted and expanded an earlier GLC scheme for 251 low-rise dwellings for which it was now seeking a compulsory purchase order from the GLC as landowner (Brindley et al, 1996).

Confusion reigned as the Secretary of State called all of the schemes in for a public inquiry in October 1978, with several more schemes coming forward before the inquiry got underway on 22 May 1979. These included an extended application by Heron Corporation for a 458-foot skyscraper hotel, and a new scheme from developers Greycoat London Estates Limited. As Brindley et al (1996) note, the Greycoats proposal was revised during the inquiry itself, with the final application taking in the whole Coin Street area in an ambitious scheme designed by architect Richard Rogers. After acquiring leases of South Bank land, including the former Boots factory, the Greycoats scheme became the frontrunner, with Heron eventually deciding to bow out (Brindley et al, 1996). CSAG's spirited campaign began now, with the AWG overseeing a comprehensive and well-orchestrated community relations initiatives that involved monthly bulletins, a neighbourhood exhibition and social events such as street theatre (Brindley et al, 1996).

The first planning inquiry lasted for a record 64 days, concluding in November 1979, and did little to resolve the confusion surrounding the future of the Coin Street sites. In July 1980, the Environment Secretary Michael Heseltine announced that he was refusing *all* of the applications, criticising the 'massive and over-dominant' office schemes and the community schemes which he argued 'failed to exploit the employment potential of the site' (Journal of

Planning and Development Law, 1983, in Brindley et al, 1996, see also Tuckett, 1988). Undeterred, Greycoats joined forces with another developer, Commercial, and presented a revised scheme as Greycoats Commercial Estates Ltd in March 1980. The new scheme consisted of 128,000 sq m of office, housing, leisure, retail and restaurant space, and was ambitious in both its scale and design. Rogers had recently completed his famous Lloyd's building in the City, and drawing on what was then a cutting-edge, post-modernist architectural style, described how the scheme,

> [P]roposed to connect Waterloo station to the City with a lofty glazed pedestrian arcade and a new footbridge across the river. The great glazed arcade was inspired by the Galleria Vittorio Emmanuele in Milan – full of light and shade and a vibrant meeting place appropriate to the changeable British climate (Rogers, undated).

The revised scheme was called in, and a second public inquiry 'became inevitable' (Brindley et al, 1996: 82). However, AWG were not to be cowed, and presented their own revised and more ambitious scheme in early 1980 consisting of 400 housing units, plus workspaces, public open space and shops. As Brindley et al (1996: 83) note, the two schemes were dramatically opposed in both architectural style, function and ethos, with the only shared element being public space on the waterfront, and 'it looked as if a conflict was about to become a battle'.

The mood was indeed tense as the second inquiry opened on 7 April 1981, and Brindley et al (1996: 83) describe local residents as being 'incensed' upon realising that the AWG scheme was not on the agenda, 'and that the inquiry should be starting before the May elections for the GLC, when a Labour victory was (correctly) predicted'. Two adjournments followed, before the eventual start of the inquiry in September 1981 and its conclusion in March 1982 (Brindley et al, 1996). There were two significant political developments in the intervening period that shifted the parameters of debate and were to determine the eventual fate of the Coin Street sites. The first was a land deal negotiated between the Conservative run GLC and Greycoats. Termed an Agreement of Sale it granted Greycoats the right to acquire all of the GLC's freehold interests at Coin Street provided it secured all of the necessary planning permissions within a three year period (Brindley et al, 1996). The second development concerned the political makeup of the GLC itself, and, as anticipated, Labour regained overall control of the GLC in the spring of 1981. The Labour administration acted quickly to back the AWG's scheme, granting the group the full-time use of one of its architects and providing administrative support (Brindley et al, 1996). The GLC also set out a commitment to 'limit the expansion of Central London activities into the South Bank' in its

(1981) policy report, *The Future of the South Bank,* later designating it as one of its protected 'Community Areas' (Brindley et al, 1996).

In December 1983, Michael Heseltine announced his decision, this time granting outline planning permission to *both* the Greycoats and the AWG schemes (Tuckett, 1988, see also Brindley, 2000, 2003, Brindley et al, 1996). As Brindley et al (1996: 84) note, Heseltine's decision was widely seen to favour Greycoats, 'since it appeared to raise the value of land beyond what the GLC could reasonably pay for it'. However, AWG were undeterred, and announced their intention to begin development on the site the following year. With the support of the GLC and the London Boroughs of Southwark and Lambeth, AWG instigated a High Court Appeal to try and overturn Greycoats' planning permission. While the Appeal was unsuccessful, time on Greycoats' purchase option on the sites was running out, and, in September 1984, they decided to pull out. As the chair of the GLC Planning Committee (GLC, 1985: 12, in Brindley et al, 1996: 86) announced,

> This is a landmark. It's the culmination of a long and determined battle by local people. The development we shall now see on this important site is the people's plan – planning for the people and by the people.

So it was that, after several years of wrangling, Coin Street Community Builders (CSCB), a body set up jointly by AWG and the North Southwark Community Development Group to oversee the purchase of the site and implementation of the scheme finally acquired land ownership rights over the site. After imposing restrictive covenants on the land, the GLC was able to sell its freeholds on 13 acres of land for a vastly reduced sum of £750,000 in June 1984 (Tuckett, 1988; see also Baeten, 2000, Brindley, 2000, Brindley et al, 1996).

As Tuckett (1988) identifies, the emergence of agendas around consultation, participation and community engagement in the planning system at this time was a key factor in the Coin Street group's eventual success. As an interviewee involved in the Coin Street campaigns recalled,

> [A]cross the country at that time, there was this growth of the consumer movement, so you had … the Aldermaston marches, you had, for the first time, the introduction of rights to participate in planning, you had the formation of the Consumers' Association and the launch of Which magazine, so this was something playing out across the country and community action was part of that sort of … movement, with self-help being part of the philosophy.

Encouraged by the positive outcome of the Coin Street campaign, residents' groups continued to proliferate in the area, leaving a legacy of strong community engagement and

activism, particularly around development and planning issues, which continues to shape regeneration today (see chapter 6). The Coin Street campaign illustrates how residents, working together, were able to destabilise the predominant planning rationale that considered the South Bank and Waterloo area to be an ideal place for office 'overspill'. For Baeten (2000), the Coin Street campaigns represents, for this reason, a rare moment of 'politics proper' wherein the hegemonic social order is interrupted and, even fleetingly, recast.

While the eventual resolution of the Coin Street campaign certainly went against the grain of the South Bank's development trajectory which, despite community interventions, seemed to point towards the inevitable expansion of office space, it is important to note that much of the eventual 'success' of the Coin Street community campaigns was due to 'top-down' state support, namely from Lambeth Council and the GLC. In this sense, Baeten's (2009) representing of the campaign as a 'David vs. Goliath' battle is perhaps exaggerated. The community campaign was well resourced, supported at a high level politically and was also timely. As an interviewee involved in local community work during the 1970s and 80s commented,

> "And it was in an amazing set of circumstances that [Coin Street won], you know. I mean that cannot be, would not be replicated anywhere else, cos lots of people come to look at Coin Street and think, how on earth did you do it? Well, lots of bloody hard work, lots of commitment, lots of energy, but, by Christ, some real luck as well. You know, there's no way that you could rely on getting that land transfer for that sort of notional value had it not been for the dying embers of the GLC and the sort of virtual class war going on under Thatcher really."

The Coin Street victory was certainly a remarkable one, however the campaign was not without its flaws. The UK's longest running planning appeal weighed significantly on the public purse, and, while, true to its word, the first phase of the AWG project was on site by the end of 1984, delivery of the remaining social housing which was managed through a series of innovative cooperative ownership agreements, was slower. The waterfront improvements contained within the AWG's planning permission were overseen first by the GLC, and completed in June 1986 at an estimated cost of £4.5 million by the London Residuary Board, following the demise of the GLC in April. Several public realm schemes, including the refurbishment of the iconic 'OXO Tower' and the landscaping of Bernie Spain gardens, followed in the 1990s (see chapter 5).

The political, economic and social contexts that gave rise to the Coin Street community 'victory' have shifted innumerous times since the mid 1980s, making predicting whether a similar outcome would be likely today a difficult task. And yet, Baeten's (2000) contention that the triumph of community-led schemes seems increasingly improbable in the current climate rings true. As chapter two has shown, while property-led development has dominated in the last 20 or so years, more recently, urban policy has begun to (re)evolve towards the notion of partnership, community and localism. At least theoretically, this should (re)open the door to increased community participation in planning and local development, and perhaps lead to more affordable housing development of the kind delivered by CSCB. However, as Baeten (2000) suggests, this is not likely to be the case. In fact, he argues, development in the South Bank has come 'full circle' from the community-led campaigns of the 1970s and 1980s with the CSCB now engaged in the kind of property-led, speculative development they once so fiercely opposed.

This is most clearly evidenced by the CSCB's development proposal for the Doon Street site (see figure 3.1). The Allies and Morrison Architects-designed 42-storey tower will create 329 private residential units to be sold on the open market to fund the operation of a leisure centre. CSCB argue that while the high cost of the development rules out the provision of any affordable housing units, the Doon St scheme will still benefit the local community by providing what it describes as 'much-needed' leisure facilities. However, despite CSCB's attempts to create a consensus of support for the scheme around this rationale of shared 'need', the proposal has angered some local residents who argue that it represents a 'betrayal' of the group's founding principles and have objected to the scale and height of the development in particular (see chapter 7). Baeten (2000: 298) argues that this is an inevitable outcome of the CSCB's involvement in 'mighty inner-city power alliances' where delivering community benefit has become a 'sort of pleasant by-effect of the regeneration policies which...have become a funds-triggering game' a contention that is revisited in chapters 6 and 7.

4.6. Conclusion

This chapter has shown how a series of periodizations, reflecting distinct yet interlinked social, cultural, economic and political contexts, have been characterised by imaginations of place that have informed approaches to planning and development in the South Bank. It has demonstrated how, over time, the imagination of the area as a *declining* residential and *growing* commercial, cultural and entertainment centre has become dominant. The decline

in the South Bank area's population which began in the mid-1800s and has continued to fall, albeit with a small rise in 2001, has been paralleled by increasing development pressures on the South Bank as the area's potential to act as an overfill office space for the over-crowded West End and City was recognised. As London became increasingly globally-orientated during the 20th century, this imagination became inscribed and rationalised through various planning documents. This is important since, as Healey (2002) suggests, 'imaginations' of places are deployed to shape city's (evolving) futures. While (dominant) imaginations can also be resisted and destabilised, as the Coin Street campaign demonstrated, it is, as Flyvbjerg (1998) has noted, inevitable that development decisions create both winners and losers.

The Coin Street years demonstrated the tensions facing the South Bank community at a time when one economic rationality – Keynesianism - ruptured and gave way to a more globally-orientated, neoliberal politics (Peck and Tickell, 2007). Since then, while it has taken different forms, a neoliberal rationality, emphasising the South Bank's role in the wider economic growth of London has informed the planning and development trajectory of the area. The remainder of the thesis shows how this rationality has become predominant through its insertion into local and regional planning and policy frameworks, and through its replication by key individuals and interest groups such as SBEG.

While this chapter has focussed upon how the South Bank as a space for growth has become a rational vision of development through its incorporation into policy and planning strategies, the agency of individual actors and organisational groupings in creating, legitimising and reinforcing development rationales has been as, if not more, important. The relative power of actors involved in this process has been critical in determining which imaginations are taken forward through the planning and development process, and which remain overlooked. Power also underpins the processes through which these development and planning decisions are 'rationalised'. As Basu (2004: 424) has suggested, 'rationalisations', 'or strategies based on power, [which are] presented as rationality', are mobilised 'in order to make people believe that a decision is justified'. The next chapter turns to look at one organisational body, South Bank Employer's Group, which, through lobbying, networking and engagement in institutional bodies such as *Local Strategic Partnerships* (LSPs), has been instrumental in shaping the current development trajectory of

the South Bank area in an age characterised by public-private partnership-working and the search for regeneration consensus.

Chapter 5. Making a 'world class place': The role of South Bank Employer's Group

5.1. Introduction

As the previous chapter has demonstrated, the planning and development trajectory of the South Bank can be understood as a series of periodizations. While these should be understood in relation to the social, economic, cultural and political specificities of the time, there is evidence that local redevelopment schemes have become organised around a pre-dominant development 'rationality' in which the South Bank is perceived and (re)presented as a *declining* residential space and *growing* commercial, cultural and visitor centre. The dominance of this (particular) reading of the area's attributes as well as its potential to become a 'world class' place, has only become more pronounced in recent years, and the objective of further economic growth in the area is now enshrined in a series of plans and policy documents including the Mayor's *London Plan* (2004).

One reason for this has been emergence of the South Bank Employer's Group (SBEG). A business-led regeneration partnership, the group has built upon this pre-existing development rationality, drawing in its members' own interests in a high quality public realm, to create a coherent, and ostensibly community-focussed business agenda. As chapter 2 has shown, enhancing business engagement in urban governance was a key policy goal for the New Labour government. Despite this, there remains relatively little recent empirical evidence showing the precise role that business-led bodies play in activities such as place-shaping. This chapter aims to address this knowledge gap, and in so doing, is primarily concerned with describing how SBEG operates, outlining its membership, operational structure, and its organisational aims and activities.

Particular attention is given to SBEG's role in formulating a local business agenda. Interview data is used to show how this agenda sought to combine group members' (multiple) interests in the area by focussing on the issue of public realm improvements. These improvements, the SBEG agenda holds, are best facilitated by pursuing further local economic growth and enhancing local development opportunities. The chapter describes how the well-networked group built momentum around its members' interests. This process was smoothed by the group's ability to lock into, and reflect in its operational

agenda, broader regeneration policy discourses such as the '*world class place'* agenda (see DCMS and DCLG, 2009).

The chapter is also concerned with characterising the group, as a way to situate SBEG's features and attributes within the broader socio-political context. In so doing, it assesses whether SBEG can be considered a product of the current phase of *reflexive modernity* which, according to Third Way ideology, demands new and more responsive forms of governance. It suggests that SBEG can be seen as a *hybrid organisation*, that is, a body operating in and across the public and private sectors. This type of organisation is seen as key in delivering Gidden's (1994) conception of a *generative politics* in which the onus is on creating the conditions for individuals and groups to deliver change without, necessarily, formalised state support. SBEG's flexible or hybrid institutional identity is shown to be a valuable asset in that it enables the group to consciously mediate between different organisational guises, such as a 'business', 'community' or 'non-profit' body, simultaneously enhancing its claim to be a politically 'neutral' or partisan organisation.

Government funding programmes such as the SRB provided a means for SBEG to begin rolling-out its agenda, and it developed a portfolio of activities including the operation of a private security patrol, as well as other less-formalised activities such as political lobbying. All of these activities are informed by SBEG's claim that it is an 'honest broker', able to act in the best interests of the wider South Bank community. The chapter problematises this conception, suggesting that the group's agenda is, necessarily, based upon a partial reading of what the area *could be*. Emphasising its status as a 'collective' or 'partnership' body also, at least potentially, serves to de-politicise the SBEG agenda which, inevitably, is orientated towards a selective set of interests. As Rose and Miller (1992: 184) point out, the formulation of shared interests is a highly political process wherein interests are 'constructed in and through political discourses, persuasions, negotiations and bargains'.

5.2. Membership, governance and leadership

Formed officially in 1994, SBEG describes itself as,

> [A] partnership of sixteen of the major organisations in South Bank, Waterloo and Blackfriars, with a long-term commitment to improving the everyday experience of the area for employees, visitors and residents alike (SBEG, undated: no page).

A not-for-profit company limited by guarantee, SBEG is governed by a board of directors appointed by its members. Individual members are representatives, generally at senior management or director level, of the major businesses, cultural and public sector bodies situated on the South Bank, although some member organisations, such as London South Bank University, are located outside the group's formalised operation boundaries (see figure 3.1). Reflecting this, SBEG's activities tend to focus on the riverside area, although in recent years, the group has expanded its interests further into the wider Waterloo area (see 5.4). The majority of SBEG's operations continue to reflect a geographically-bounded conception of the 'South Bank' although it is adept at highlighting the London-wide and/or global significance of its activities (see 5.4, see also chapter 6).

SBEG's membership structure operates on a voluntary basis, setting it apart from models such as the *Business Improvement Districts* (BIDs), which are funded through statutory levies on business occupiers. Indeed, as a pre-existing business interest group, SBEG members were asked to be involved in early research into the viability of a UK BID system, funded by the Corporation of London (see Travers and Weimar, 1996). They also lobbied for the adoption of BID legislation during the mid-late 1990s and early 2000s. In 2001, Iain Tuckett, a Director of Coin Street Community Builders and founding member of SBEG, and SBEG's then CEO accompanied LSE academic, Tony Travers, on a fact finding mission to New York to look at BIDs in the city. As an ex-SBEG staff member recalled in interview, the group seriously considered adopting the BID model,

> "...I personally felt...[becoming a BID] would be a very sensible evolution for SBEG, which in a sense was a bit [unique], there weren't many places like South Bank in Britain, as a way of working [at that time]".

Following a series of successful pilot programmes, BID legislation was formally introduced under the 2003 UK *Local Government Act*. Archived SBEG business reports from the early 2000s onwards record the debates that went on within the group as they considered applying for BID status,

> The highest priority is to develop a coherent plan for upgrading the management of the area, ensuring that statutory authorities accept their responsibilities and meet their obligations...and creating a viable business plan for delivering additional services leading to a safer, cleaner, more attractive area.
>
> ...This work will inform whether we should proceed with a Business Improvement District or an expanded voluntary arrangement. Either route will also require a full examination of all possible sources of additional funding, including landowners' voluntary contributions, Section 106 and public funds.
>
> If the decision is to follow a voluntary route the aim should be to introduce a new regime in the first half of 2006. If the Board resolves to follow the BID option election procedures will postpone a start on full delivery until later in 2006 or early 2007 (SBEG, 2005: 1).

As chapter 2 has shown, the UK BID system differs from the US model in that it is business occupiers and not only land owners who are included in the levy-paying arrangements. SBEG members felt that this, along with the BID system's requirement that levy-payers must be balloted every 5 years, would impede the group's ability to sustain a long-term or *strategic overview* of local area development. This, as later sections of the research show, is fundamental to SBEG's (self) identity. SBEG members also felt that the group already operated services over and above the value of what the BID revenue could deliver, and were concerned that, due to the large number of charitable organisations in the area who would be included in any levy-paying arrangement, revenues would not be increased. This point is made in the SBEG 2006-09 business plan,

> The option of a formal BID has been ruled out because existing service provision is below standard so a BID will not offer additionality, and the proportion of privately managed public realm and prevalence of 80% charity rate relief among major organisations negates the rationale and potential income of a formal BID (SBEG, 2006: 2-3).

Instead, the group opted to retain its voluntary membership model, which it argued was more conducive to collaborative working. It also suggested that a voluntary approach was more appropriate in meeting the 'special needs' of the South Bank,

> A voluntary approach is based on collaboration with the boroughs and will be pursued until it is clearly not working. If it seems unlikely that Central London standards can be secured by this [BID] route, a high profile campaign will attempt to secure an independent status for service delivery in our area. This would be based on a voluntary or specially constituted BID-type arrangement, recognising the special needs and status of the area (SBEG, 2006: 3).

Currently, SBEG members pay a subscription fee of around £19,500 per year, a figure that is supplement by revenue-generating activities such as consultancy and project management, with an additional fee for sub-group membership. As table 5.1 shows, SBEG currently has 6

sub-groups, made up of both member and non-member organisations, and which are broadly aligned to SBEG's activities and interests.

Table 5.1. SBEG sub-groups

SBEG sub-groups	Description
The South Bank Property Group	Made up of the landowning members of South Bank Employers' Group, as well as non-member property owners and developers with interests in the area.
The Public Realm Group	Consists of members and non-members with an interest in the management, maintenance and development of public realm services.
The South Bank Marketing Group	Comprises those members with tourism interests, together with additional local visitor and cultural attractions and representatives from Lambeth Council.
The Employment and Skills Group	Made up of local employers (both members and non-members), along with other bodies committed to providing employment opportunities for the residents of Lambeth and Southwark.
The North Southwark and North Lambeth Sport Action Zone Board	Oversees community sport and the related work of the Sport Action Zone which is hosted by South Bank Employers' Group.
Jubilee Gardens Steering Group	Consists of representatives from Shell, London Eye and the South Bank Centre and other major stakeholders leading on a revised plan for improvements to Jubilee Gardens.

Source: Author's own

SBEG's internal structure operates much like a private enterprise. It employs a full-time Chief Executive, who provides leadership and acts as the key interface between members and non-SBEG partners including local authority representatives, while a Finance and Executive Committee oversees budgeting and expenditure. SBEG currently comprises of 23 staff, 3 of whom are employed on a part-time basis, and whose responsibilities broadly reflect SBEG's core areas of operation. An additional 17 staff run the *Sports Action Zone* (SAZ) community sports programme which is hosted by SBEG.

The group's Chief Executive is supported by a Chair, elected internally from SBEG's current pool of members, and who oversees quarterly board meetings. These meetings are a key part of the group's inner-workings, and provide a forum for the discussion of SBEG's operational priorities and future activities, with the 21 board members voting on specific issue where required. During the main research period (January 2008-September 2009), SBEG's membership consisted of 18 organisations, drawn from a range of industries from both the public and private sectors (table 5.2, see also appendix 11).

Table 5.2. SBEG's member organisations

Public-sector and non-corporate members	Private-sector and corporate members
British Film Institute Coin Street Community Builders Guy's and St Thomas's NHS Foundation Trust Guy's and St Thomas's Charity King's College London London Development Agency London South Bank University Network Rail National Theatre South Bank Centre	Ernst and Young IBM UK ITV Whitbread Park Plaza Hotels The London Eye Company P&O Developments Shell

Source: Author's own

As table 5.2 shows, that there is a relatively even split between public and private sectors, with 10 non-commercial, and 8 commercial members, and organisations drawn from cultural, education, leisure, entertainment, finance, petroleum, property development, and healthcare industries, along with a regional government department. However, while the group is sectorally diverse, there are similarities between members. Namely, organisations are large, often employing upwards of several hundred staff, and, importantly, even if they are not private-sector, tend to be run much like a private business. As a representative of a non-commercial member organisiations explained,

> "We make £30 million year surplus, and this funds capital that we use to redevelop. As a Board we operate very much as a commercial enterprise. We also have 1500 people employed on site including architects, engineers, postal staff etc".

This, in part, explains why the group is often described, and identifies itself as, a private-sector or business *led* body, despite the fact that less than half of its members are commercial corporations. As a SBEG staff member explained in interview, although the

group is often perceived as, and indeed, *represents itself as* a third-sector or neighbourhood partnership body, at core, "we are a business organisation and the sort of stuff we've got everybody to sign up to here is about business and growth".

The gender composition of the group's membership is worthwhile reflecting upon briefly here. The continued dominance of the upper tiers of private, and, to a lesser extent, public sector management by white, usually middle-aged, males, is well documented (see Brammer et al, 2007, Bourez, 2005). One consequence of this is that, in the majority of countries, there is an under-representation of women, and people from ethnic minorities, within urban governance bodies (see Cook, 2009, Peck and Tickell, 1996, Robinson and Shaw, 2003, Shaiko, 1997). SBEG's membership profile appears to reflect these trends, and out of the 21 board members interviewed, only 4 were female, and none were non-white. One female member of the group commented, in interview, that she felt it was a "male dominated group", and that there was a risk of it, "becoming a boy's club".

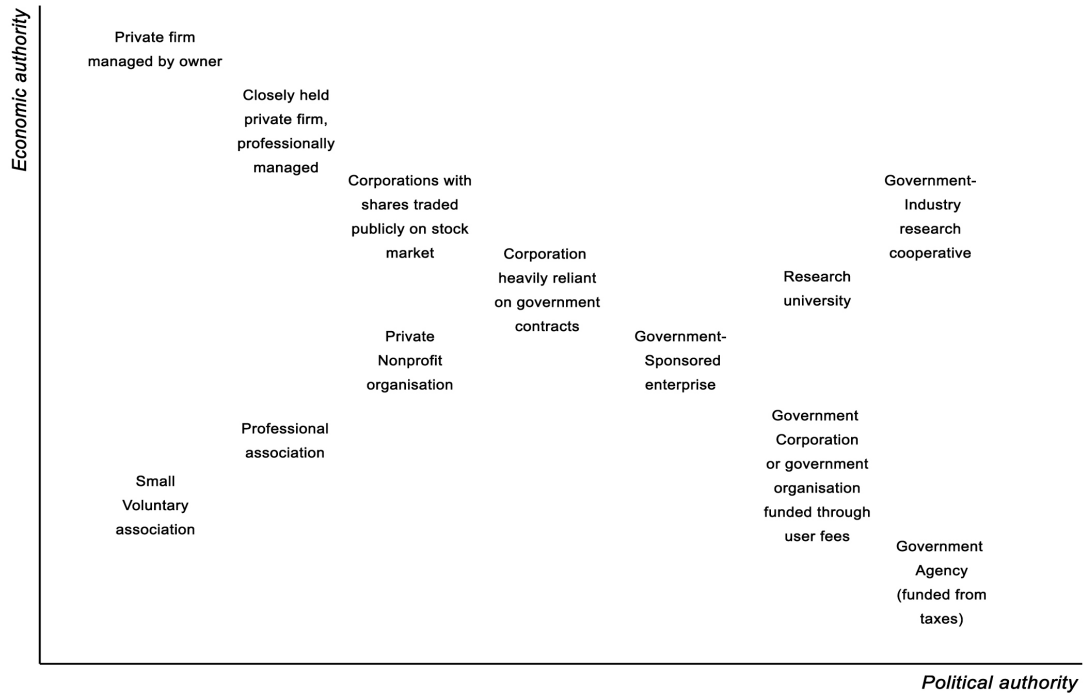
McDowell's (1997) research on financial banking in the City of London has shown that a series of 'sexualized and gendered scripts' operate in the workplace, shaping the realms of acceptable behaviour. In relation to male City financiers, McDowell found that this was manifested in testosterone-fuelled risk-taking that saw female employees excluded from many work practices. Peck and Tickell's (1996) study of the 'Manchester Men' finds evidence of a similarly gendered business community, where (male) representatives style themselves as a pro-active and aggressively results-orientated business 'mafia'. In the case of SBEG, gendered practices were much more subtle, but it was observed that the group's focus on networking, and the hosting of private dinners and receptions by mainly male company directors and upper-tier managers, did create an air of exclusivity that could, at least potentially, exhibit an exclusionary element along gendered lines (see chapter 6).

The group's decision to refer to itself as an 'employer's group' captures the fact that SBEG's institutional identity is neither straightforwardly 'public' nor 'private'. As Weintraub (1997: 1-2) notes, the distinction between 'public' and 'private' 'has been a central and characteristic preoccupation of western thought since classical antiquity', though the multiple understandings and uses of the terms 'generate as much confusion as illumination'. Body-Gendrot et al (2008) demonstrate the lengthy genealogy of public-private interrelations in the planning, construction and management of urban space, yet in

recent years, the blurring of public-private boundaries has been amplified further by a series of social, economic, political and cultural shifts that have seen networked forms of multi-sector governance predominate (see Booth, 2005, chapter 2).

As section 5.3 shows, SBEG is closely involved in the provision of localised public services, and often works in partnership with state and other non-state bodies in doing so. In seeking to understand and analyse the emergence of quasi-public bodies of this type, researchers have developed continuums that chart the characteristics of organisations from wholly private enterprises to government agencies (see Rainey and Bozeman, 2000). For Bozeman (1987), all organizations are public to some degree, and 'publicness' – defined as their degree of political influence and the extent to which they are subject to external government control - can be measured (see figure 5.1).

Figure 5.1. Measuring organizational 'publicness'



Source: Rainey (1997: 68, based on Bozeman, 1987)

Increasingly globalised flows of information and knowledge have, as Karré et al (2008: 8) note, placed the onus on organisations working in 'networks and chains...coalitions and partnerships, strategic alliances and other forms of cooperation'. Interconnectedness between public and private bodies is, in this scenario, heightened, making it 'impossible to determine exactly where one alliance ends and another one starts' (Karré et al, 2008: 8). In

this sense, graphical representations, such as figure 5.1, that seek to measure and categorise organisations according to sets of 'static' criteria, may be conducting a futile exercise. Instead, the term 'hybrid' has been proposed as a way to reflect the (changing) attributes of those organizations' navigating the '[b]lurring boundaries between public and private, organizations and network, and local and global' (Karré et al, 2008: 13).

'Hybrid' is a term that reflects SBEG's ability to navigate across public and private spheres, in both the activities it engages in (see 5.3), and its membership profile. Indeed, the decision to adopt the name 'employer's group' further *enhances* SBEG's organisational hybridity in that it does not pigeonhole the group, in the way that the title 'business group' might, into a particular sectoral category. This is important given that 'private' and 'public' sectors have been understood as 'driven by different sets of competing and incompatible values' (Karre et al, 2008: 2, see chapter 7). While, as chapter 2 has shown, the Third Way politics has sought to overcome this by promoting public-private working, perceptions about what a private sector or interest-driven group should or *should not* do remain, and continue to shape the parameters of partnership working (see chapter 7). In choosing to adopt a relatively open-ended, even ambiguous, organisational title, SBEG is able to reflexively, that is, consciously and in response to the requirements of different social situations, adopt different institutional identities. As a staff member explained in interview, the group's different organisational identities are deployed when deemed necessary, "We're a business representative when we need to be and a not-for-profit when it suits us" (see also chapter 6).

For some, this institutional flexibility is also part and parcel of a process of neutralisation, whereby the interest-based nature of organisational agendas is consciously down-played (Southern, 2001). In interview, SBEG members sought to emphasise the partisan and/or 'neutral' qualities of the group by suggesting the group frequently assumed the role of what one interviewee described as an "honest broker" in the negotiation of multiple, and often conflicting, interests (see chapter 6). As another SBEG member commented,

> "[SBEG's] become a highly respected neutral group within the [South Bank's] organisation...[it] plays this very good role of being trusted by all parties...I think we're politically very astute, we try and achieve a bipartisan approach."

The group's ability to adopt such a role was seen to derive from its status as a 'partnership' body, something which one SBEG member suggested enabled the group to balance multiple interests and needs more effectively than a *purely* business-interest group,

> "I think [SBEG's] got the benefit of the South Bank at heart, whereas some organisations, you actually think they're lobbying purely on behalf of business. I know that [SBEG's Chief Executive] is obviously commercially focused but they're acutely aware of the need for social facilities..."

Others agreed, suggesting that SBEG's collective status gave its activities greater legitimacy,

> "If it's a collective discussion involving the South Bank, then there's a feeling that there's a legitimacy to it...you know, in some instances...it could be viewed as for personal gain, as opposed to it's a genuine intent to change something for the better."

Indeed, the bringing together of public and private sectors into a multi-sector partnership was a deliberate strategy that was driven by well-noted community actors such as senior members of the Coin Street Community Builders. By the early 1990s, CSCB were well-underway with the delivery of a range of housing and public realm improvements in and around the Coin Street sites (see figure 5.2), and were looking to forge new alliances with local stakeholders to drive forward regeneration.

Figure 5.2. Coin Street sites, 1984 (left) and in 1997 (right).

Source: CSCB (2007: no page)

As an interviewee explained,

> "The South Bank Employers' Group...it's not just private business it's people like Guy's and St. Thomas' [Hospital], it's the local universities, it's...in some extent, most importantly, it's Coin Street Community Builders, which has got sort of tentacles throughout. So that sort of mixing has proved a very robust model."

Members felt strongly that the group was not a 'political' organisation, and comments such as the following were typical, "I don't see it as a political organisation. I see it as...a useful intermediary in dealing with the small p [of politics]". Indeed, SBEG's positioning of itself as a 'neutral' or 'a-political' body is a central component in a related claim; to act in the interests and on behalf of not only its members, but the wider South Bank community. As a staff member explained in interview, "my attitude is what's good for us is good for them". This statement expresses SBEG's conviction that the needs and interests of its members and the wider community are the same, and, furthermore, stand the best chance of being met through working in partnership. As chapter 4 has shown, historically this has not always been the case, and statements of this kind are part of SBEG-led attempts to flatten the terrain of debate in relation to issues of regeneration, planning and development. This is underpinned by the group's conviction that agreement between business and resident groups has to be sought if things are going to "get done" (see chapter 6).

The decision to adopt the name 'employer's group' is related to SBEG's desire to emphasise its collective nature. It awards SBEG a certain institutional gravitas and kudos by highlighting the significant number of employees represented by the group. This is something which its members felt had positively disposed other bodies towards working with SBEG,

> "I don't think they would work with us in the same way if we had this sort of quazi-agency role, but [they respect us] because we're a group of employers who have an enlightenment of self-interest about how we sit within the community".

What this quote suggests is that while there are benefits in adopting a 'flexible' institutional identity, it also remains important for SBEG to identify itself as a locally-rooted group of 'enlightened' employers. As an interviewee commented, making it evident that the group represents the interests of several thousand local employees was important as, "when you're an employers' group, it does tend to flex the planning system as well, because you're then seen as a player". The importance of the South Bank as a centre for local, and moreover Borough-wide, employment is something that the group has emphasised in its attempts to assume a leading role in economic strategy-making (see chapter 6) [16].

[16] In a SBEG-commissioned report, members' employees are estimated to total around 10,000, with the number likely to have increased as new members come on board (Llewelyn-Davies and Imagination, 1994).

The question of who is *not* a SBEG member is also worthwhile reflecting upon. The group refers to itself as a collective of 'major organisations', as a way to reflect the organisational size and stature, and diverse industry profile, of its membership. While small to medium-sized businesses are not excluded from joining the group, the informal nature of the group's operations during its formative years, when meetings were organised through personal connections, along with the significant annual subscription fees, means that smaller, less well-networked and well-financed bodies, while not precluded from joined SBEG, are less predisposed to becoming members. As Bourdieu (1991: 138) notes, the 'laws of group formation themselves (e.g. the logic of conscious or unconscious exclusions)...function like a prior censorship'.

Instead, these organisations' interests in the area are represented, alongside those of larger bodies including SBEG itself, by a neighbouring BID. *Waterloo Quarter Business Alliance* (WQBA) was established in 2002 as part of a pilot BID scheme, and operates in the area surrounding Waterloo station. As a WQBA representative commented in interview, SBEG's tendency to focus its activities in the relatively small geographical area in and around the riverside, attracted criticism from some small business owners located in and around Waterloo Station, and who felt their interests were not being represented by SBEG,

> "there was a perception from local businesses that the South Bank, in terms of the riverside, had completely transformed over the last 10-15 years, and then you come south of the railway and the station and you feel like you're stepping back 20 years or more...And so, businesses locally wanted to set up a Business Improvement District...to generate that...additional investment that they were missing".

This was a viewpoint that was supported by local small businesses, as a local bookshop manager commented in interview,

> "everybody's heard of the South Bank…and the Oxo Tower because of…it's location, and the riverside…and everything like that…but people still are really unaware I think of Lower Marsh, people know about The Cut because of the Old Vic…people come out of the station and they turn left and go straight down the Cut, but they never come this way…but if you think about it, there's no sort of road signage".

Concerns about signage in and around Waterloo Station form a central focus for WQBA's activities and, latterly, SBEG's too. As a SBEG staff member explained, after some initial mutual distrust, the two groups were now working together on issues, such as the proposed regeneration of Lower Marsh market. However, and as he made clear, the groups had their own (separate) interests and agendas to cater for, "people know what my constituency is, they know what the Waterloo Quarter BID's constituency is". What this

quote suggests is that local business agendas should not be conceived of as homogenous, cohesive entities. While SBEG has become the dominant employers' voice in the South Bank, it is certainly not a lone voice and, indeed, its own carefully crafted agenda represents a multitude of different organisational and personal viewpoints.

In contrast to a BID, SBEG's voluntary status allows it some selectivity over its membership profile and members described how 'like-minded' individuals, similarly concerned with issues such as public realm improvements and local economic development were invited to join the group. Interviewees described an informal screening process which operates on the tacit understanding that any potential member should demonstrate a long-term commitment to the area. As a SBEG member explained,

> "the fact [is] that there is a certain amount of consistency in terms of people having joined and stayed with it for a long time...I mean obviously what [SBEG is] trying to do is find people who are going to be moving in and staying around..."

One consequence of this process, as the above quote suggests, is that SBEG's membership structure has remained relatively stable at around 18 member organisations since the early 2000s, with few organisations either leaving or joining the group (see appendix 11). Ensuring members have a long-term commitment to the area is also seen as a way to ensure the group retains a 'strategic overview' of the South Bank's regeneration needs. As one member explained,

> "We've been trying to get membership onboard...and...we're interested in having employers in the area who have a long term stake in it. [We're] not interested in sort of fly-by-nights, you know, short leases, five, ten years and stuff".

Phrases such as "long-term interest" and "significant stake" were used by members when they responded to a question, in interview, about why their organisation decided to join SBEG. As one member suggested, membership is "a long term dividend, and it has to be viewed in that context". Such comments resonate with local dependence theory, in which, Cox and Mair (1988: 310) suggest,

> …the primary interest of locally dependent firms is in defending or enhancing the flow of value through a specific locality: the territory that defines for them a geographically circumscribed context of exchange relations critical to their reproduction, and that...is difficult to reconstitute elsewhere.

For Cox and Mair (1988: 310), dependence is intrinsically linked to organisational (im)mobility which, they argue, can be constrained by a number of factors, including the 'non-substitutability of localized exchange linkages', such as acquired local knowledge,

organisational trust and brand loyalty, or by built environment investments that accrue value over long periods of time. It is when firms' operations become locked into a specific geographical area, Cox and Mair (1988: 310) suggest, that they are most likely to invest in their locale,

> Locally dependent firms engage in collective strategies via business coalitions in order to realize their common interests in a particular area, interests that are antagonistic to those of locally dependent firms in other places.

Since several SBEG members have significant land holdings (see appendix 11, see also figure 3.1) and therefore stand to benefit from increased land values, local dependence theory is at least suggestive of why SBEG was formed. Cox and Mair's (1988) claims also resonate with those member organisations whose organisational identities and operational cultures are firmly rooted in the South Bank area. Bodies such as the South Bank Centre, an iconic centre for arts, culture and entertainment, makes much of its location on the now vibrant riverside and, arguably, could not exist in its current form elsewhere. These large organisations were also felt to lend a sense of rootedness to SBEG, something that was something also picked up on by non-SBEG members, and as a CLG representatives commented,

> "I guess it's because they've got some very big employers who act as sort of anchors to the process. I guess it's probably because there are [there] it's a kind of defined space with a sort of, you know, boundary".

Appreciating this embeddedness requires a sensitivity towards what Cox (1998: 20) refers to as business actors' *social relations* which, he argues, 'become not merely *in* but also *of* a particular place'. The locally-specific nature of many of SBEG members' interests suggest that this observation is pertinent, and this research posits that business-led group's organisational identities should be thought of as being constructed in, but also, a product of (specific readings of) local place.

While Cox and Mair's theory of local dependence is sensitised towards a relational view of place, its emphasis is nonetheless on the explanatory power of exchange values, and it therefore does not capture all of the reasons put forward by members for joining SBEG. Interviews with members supported Cook's (2009) claim that business engagement is not a rational endeavour, and while profit-maximisation is at the root of SBEG membership for many members, others, often those who have lived and worked in the area for many years, have a far more complex, even emotional, attachment to the South Bank locale. As one

member, who has lived and worked in the greater Lambeth area for over 40 years commented,

> "I mean what most of us love about the South Bank is the residential community, I mean you go under the railway line you've got loads of people living there, but they might as well live on another planet sometimes. I think what SBEG does try to do is bring in the local residents... there is a lot of care for local people".

Table 5.3 presents a typology of interests that illustrates the varied nature of members' reasons for joining SBEG. They include what is termed a *pragmatic self-interest* in creating a more attractive (and also more profitable) public realm, as well as a desire to access what Cook (2009) refers to as the organisational 'inner circle' of politicians, funding networks, as well as planning information and advice that was seen to flow from the forging of collective arrangements (see also Thornley et al, 2005). As a SBEG member explained in interview,

> "[My boss said to me] 'Really, we want to find out who we need to get to know in the boroughs.' Not to curry favour in any sinister way, but... because the boroughs all have slightly different organisations, you don't know whether you want to talk to the leader about something, and that's why South Bank [Employer's Group] was incredibly helpful, because they brokered a number of meetings with us, and it was just, you know, 'We know this person because they're on this planning committee, we know this person because they're working with us on this project.' And they weren't saying what their view of any of those projects were, but what they were doing was helping us to navigate".

Other responses resonate with what Strange (1996) has termed the *new paternalistic urban governance*. Members referred to SBEG's "social agenda", a rather vague notion, which, for the majority of members, revolved around a mutual sense of responsibility that, as 'enlightened' local employers, they should seek to maximise job opportunities for local people. Members also spoke about the ways in which local people "benefit from the fact there's stuff going on here, provided it's done in a considerate and thoughtful way". This is a sentiment that, although reflecting what was a genuine belief that the SBEG's activities could deliver benefits 'for all', is problematic given the group's status as a private interest group.

Table 5.3. Members' reasons for joining SBEG

Typology of interest	Supporting quotes from members
Pragmatic self-interest	"[W]e had an interest in making the area more attractive for visitors and for audiences"; "I mean we're a commercial company so therefore we're trying to make money, basically, we're not in it as a charitable organisation, but we do want to try to, hopefully, improve the area"; "they've managed to get our chief executive in to see Boris [Johnson, London's Mayor]...They have very good relationships with the LDA and TFL, CLG and obviously with Lambeth Council"; "they provide access for networking opportunities, they get some of the big hitters from regional and central government".
New paternalistic urban governance	"[SBEG's] been pursuing a social agenda as well...because the employers themselves...are very keen to create local jobs for local people"; "what really defines and unites that group is the desire to make this a better area to live and work in, and that's really the driver for just about everything"; "I think it's got the benefit of the South Bank at heart, whereas some organisations, you actually think they're lobbying purely on behalf of business"; "the big employer's working together to employ people is really important".
Business localism	"I think that we can work together and probably more credibly do things beyond our own patches if we identify particular problems...I think we are more effective as a group"; "we're not in it for business, we're in it for this area...and that's what we have in common"; 'we can make a bigger impact on our surroundings collectively than we can as individuals".
Business knows-best	"if it weren't for us nothing would happen"; "We all felt we had a sufficient enough common agenda that...it would be more powerful to act together, we were also sitting in a completely dysfunctional local authority in Lambeth Council..."; "[SBEG] has helped put the area on the map politically...[with] all three tiers of government".

Source: Author's own

The concept of *business localism*, or of geographically-rooted and co-operative forms of action, was frequently invoked by SBEG members, who described having "more power collectively...in terms of planning and influence, than we would have individually". Interviewees also referred to what is termed a *business knows best* mentality, whereby group members identified themselves as the local actors with the 'strategic' understanding of matters such as local property market dynamics needed to "get things done". This kind of pro-active, bottom-up and self-organised local engagement, in which individuals and groups seek to 'make things happen' of their own accord, is precisely what Giddens' (1994:

15) envisages in the development of *generative politics.* This, he argues, 'exists in the space that links the state to reflexive mobilization in the society at large' and works by 'providing the material conditions and organizational frameworks, for the life-political decisions taken by individuals and groups in the wider social order' (Giddens, 1994: 15).

While Giddens' ideas have been taken up by New Labour, and are evidenced in new organizational frameworks such as LSPs and BIDs in which a generative approach to the management of 'life-politics' is embedded, in the early years of SBEG's existence, the political-institutional context was somewhat different. Indeed, in explaining the group's belief that it is best-placed to understand, and also act upon, the South Bank's regeneration needs, SBEG members (and other local stakeholders) recounted how, until relatively recently, the two local authorities, Lambeth and Southwark Councils, were, as one member put it, "not the hell interested in the area". Several interviewees spoke of a local governance "vacuum" that emerged following the abolition of the GLC, a body which had a special interest in the development of the South Bank (see chapter 4). Where development plans for the South Bank existed, interviewees suggested that they were based on a poor understanding of the area's unique "central London characteristics". This, members argued, necessitated the formation of a coherent regeneration agenda, which the business community felt it was well-placed to forge[17].

One staff member claimed that, over time, local government had become complicit in the transferring of responsibility for the area's development needs to the group, "So I think over the years it's become easier for [local authority] officers just to go, 'Oh, forget about South Bank and Waterloo, SBEG'll do it'". As chapter 7 shows, this is by no means a viewpoint to which all local government officers subscribe, and in making such statements SBEG staff and members are, arguably, engaging in a process of (self) legitimisation wherein the claim is that the private sector has both the entrepreneurial drive and the skills-set required to deliver regeneration in an increasingly competitive inter-urban landscape (see also chapter 2).

[17] The lack of local authority leadership on place shaping in the South Bank until recent years is also acknowledged by council representatives (see chapter 7). This context is critical in understanding the complex, and, at times, turbulent, relationship SBEG has with local government (see chapter 7).

5.3. Activities

The (self) positioning of SBEG as a dynamic force in the regeneration of the South Bank is persistent and is fore-grounded in members' belief that there can be a "better South Bank for all". This *imagined sense of (future) place*, is a common conception around which SBEG's operational aims and activities coalesce. For its members, SBEG provides a forum through which to explore, collectively, what they envisaged the area *becoming.* It is the promise of this more prosperous future that is central to understanding why SBEG formed. In addition to recognising the commercial benefits to be gained through regeneration, SBEG members also saw the potential for creating a more coherent and cohesive *sense of place*.

For Pow (2009: 94-95), the desire to transform place is a natural urge since, 'humans beings are inescapably 'place-makers' and users who fashion places according to our ideas and images of what reality ought to be'. Massey's (2004: 5) call for a relational understanding of space, which emphasises the production of space through 'practices, trajectories, inter-relations', is instructive here since it points towards what she terms the, 'relational construction of an identity of place'. Seen from this perspective, identities are not seen as 'rooted or static', but rather as 'mutable ongoing productions' (Massey: 2004: 5).

A dynamic relation to place was something referred by SBEG members, and as one interviewee remarked, "the longer we are here the more [the area] has to offer", a statement that indicates member organisations' relationship with the South Bank locale is not static, but is instead evolving and emergent. Such conceptions of local place also suggests that members' relationship to place is not only determined by the area's current qualities (or indeed its perceived deficiencies), but rather, is forward-looking and based upon a conception of what the area *could become*. As a member described, building an *aspirational* regeneration agenda for the South Bank was a process that involved members, "talking about what was wrong with the area, creating a positive vision and then, if you like, promoting that, signing people up to it, and then lobbying for public support of that."

As the above quote suggests, a key part of SBEG's operational strategy has been to develop a series of programmes that remain united by core strategic concerns related to the South Bank's public realm. Members' concerns about the quality of the South Bank's physical environs have, inevitably, evolved over time. For example, recently there has been a move away from a 'repairing and replacing' mentality and towards a 'management and

maintenance' agenda as the numbers of visitors to the area has risen. Yet, despite this, a shared understanding of what a high-quality public realm should consist of remains an undercurrent in all of SBEG's activities. As the group's website (SBEG, undated) states,

> Improving the physical environment of Waterloo was at the heart of the original establishment of South Bank Employers' Group. Although the South Bank of today is virtually unrecognisable from that of fifteen years ago, there's still much more to be done. Improving the public realm is still a key driver for our work.

As previous sections have shown, the group's current activities remain rooted in a geographically-bounded conception of the South Bank area. However, while the riverside area is still the core focus of activity, SBEG plays an increasingly active role in ensuring Waterloo station and its environs are brought up to the 'high-standard' that it feels has been set by recent regeneration. As one staff member commented,

> "Ideally we'd then want to see another surge with things like Waterloo City Square [a public realm regeneration scheme in the vicinity of the station] taking place and the linking up of the riverside back to Lower Marsh, and making this street bearable, making the exits to Waterloo station on either side much more sort of coherent.. so I think the kind of regeneration it's just coming in waves...and I think the station, that will be quite instrumental in how that agenda's moved forward, and so it kind of keeps going really."

The proposed redevelopment of Lower Marsh market, a scheme which SBEG project manages, is one example of the group's future ambitions for the area. According to the SBEG-authored regeneration plans (SBEG, 2009a), the project will deliver a,

> …complete holistic redesign of the urban environment...to achieve a world class urban environment that supports both the Borough and Mayoral objectives identified within Lambeth policy and the Waterloo Opportunity Area Planning framework.

This discursive interlinking of neighbourhood regeneration issues with local, regional and national policy agendas, such as the world class place agenda, is typical of SBEG's style of working, and reflects the detailed knowledge its staff have of regeneration and planning issues. This expertise is, for members, one of the key draws of SBEG membership, and presents an opportunity for member organisations to 'sound out' their own development plans, discretely, to expert ears. It also ensures that SBEG's agenda compliments broader regeneration initiatives and objectives, a factor that continues to be instrumental in ensuring the group's goals receive political support at the highest possible level (see chapter 6).

SBEG's current activities, summarised in table 5.4, reflect both its members' interests, and staff expertise in, regeneration, development and planning. Activities fall into three broad categories: the coordination and delivery of capital regeneration projects and programmes; the provision and management of local services; and governance and strategy (for a historical overview of SBEG's past activities see appendix 12).

Table 5.4. SBEG's activities

Description	**Waterloo City Square** Public realm improvements to IMAX roundabout and surrounding area	**Jubilee Gardens** Redesign of gardens surrounding London Eye	**Lower Marsh Area-Based Scheme** Public realm improvements, and proposed privatised management system	**South Bank Patrol** Operates 7 days/11-11pm, officers work in an ambassadorial and enforcement role	**Info bikes** Advice and information service aimed at visitors	**South Bank Clean Team** 7 day/week cleaning patrol	**Graffiti Removal Service**
Activity type	Capital regeneration projects and programmes	Capital regeneration projects and programmes	Capital regeneration projects and programmes	Local service provision	Local service provision	Local service provision	Local service provision
SBEG's role	Project manages design competition	Chair of steering group; overseeing fundraising	Project manages design competition	Manages on behalf of SBP	Operation and support as part of partnership of; Visit London, LDA, SBEG, Better Bankside, Team London Bridge, & Impact Print Distribution	Manages on behalf of SBEG	Manages on behalf of SBP
Status	Active	Active [delivery date June 2012]	Active	Active [launched Nov 2008]	Inactive	Active	Active [launched Apr 2007]
Funding	Unsecured	Transport for London; London Eye S106 (N.B. Additional £1 million sought privately)	London Borough of Lambeth	London Eye S106; London Borough of Lambeth; employer contributions	Jointly funded by partnership	London Eye S106	London Eye S106 plus employer contributions

Source: Author's own

Description	**Public toilet provision review**	**Digital radio communications network**	**Waterloo Job Shop** Employer-led employment support service aiming to help local people into jobs	**Southbanklondon.com** Visitor info website	**Lambeth First LSP**	**South Bank Partnership**	**North Lambeth and North Southwark Sports Action Zone** Runs community sports and leisure programmes with a focus on social inclusion/cohesion	**Lobbying** All tiers of government, funding bodies and other relevant stakeholders for recognition of the South Bank's needs
Activity type	Local service provision	Local service provision	Local service provision	Local service provision	Governance and strategy	Governance and strategy	Governance and strategy	Governance and strategy
SBEG's role	Conducted review & produced strategy for additional facilities	Manages network	Operates job shop	Manages website	Main business representative	Provide secretariat	Host organisation	Networking and lobbying through member contacts
Status	Active	Active	Active [funding secured until 2011]	Active [launched 2007]	Active	Active	Active	Active
Funding	S106 via Lambeth Visitor Management Group	Private member contributions	London Borough of Lambeth; employer contributions	Visitor Management Gruoup	Neighbourhood Renewal Funding	Secretariat provided by SBEG	Aylesbury NDC; Football Foundation; Boroughs of Lambeth and Southwark; National Sports Foundation; National Street Games; Nike; PositiveFutures; Southwark PCT; Sport England	Private member contributions (subscription)

Source: Author's original work

Table 5.4 shows that, although the delivery of physical regeneration schemes remains a key element of SBEG's work, the group has begun to move into what is termed a *local area management role*. Encompassing a range of activities such as graffiti removal and security patrols, this is, in part, a pragmatic attempt to generate sustainable income for the group, particularly given the recent adverse economic conditions (see chapter 8). It is also part of a broader, strategic, attempt to align the group with the New Localism agenda which advocates the devolution of governance powers, such as the running of local services, to non-governmental bodies including businesses (see chapters 1, 2 and 8). While, currently, the majority of the services SBEG operates are run alongside local authority services, the group has ambitions to assume sole responsibility for activities such as street cleaning. As a SBEG staff member explained, "we don't want duplication we want additionality...So it's economies of scale and additionality, that's what we want". As figure 5.3, which outlines SBEG's planned activities for the 2009-2012 period demonstrates, this is part of a wider attempt to position the group as a 'best practice' neighbourhood delivery agent, a positioning that is explored further in chapters 6 and 7.

Figure 5.3. SBEG's planned activities, 2009-2012

From 2009-2012 we will:
- Work with statutory authorities and businesses to develop and provide on their behalf sustainable, high quality neighbourhood services and maintenance.
- Play a central role in planning, promoting and delivering incremental improvements to the area's public realm.
- Influence national, regional and local government policy and priorities to secure the best possible benefits for the local neighbourhood and to maximise the contribution it makes to the economic and cultural life of London, Lambeth and Southwark.
- Reinforce our role as a best practice delivery partner and consultant of choice.
- Secure the financial sustainability of the organisation and the services it delivers.

Source: SBEG (2009a: no page)

Table 5.4 also indicates the emphasis SBEG places on its activities in the area of *governance and strategy*, a category which encompasses its involvement in three local partnership bodies, *Lambeth First* (LSP), the *South Bank Partnership* (SBP) and the *North Lambeth and Southwark Sports Action Zone* (SAZ), as well as informal lobbying and networking activities. As chapter 6 shows, these activities have been instrumental in ensuring, firstly; that the SBEG agenda is brought to the attention of key political figures and bodies and receives

political 'buy-in', and secondly; that the group is seen to be addressing the three democratic 'design problems' of legitimacy, consent and accountability, which, in turn, strengthens its claims to represent the wider interests of the South Bank community (Justice and Skelcher, 2009, see also chapters 2 and 6).

5.4. Delivering a world-class place

SBEG's activities are underpinned by a conception of the South Bank as a central London location of international commercial and cultural importance. As chapter 4 has shown, this development rationality was enshrined in a series of plans that sought to release the economic growth potential of the South Bank. SBEG has extended this rationality in calling for the provision of a world-class quality public realm as a way to kickstart further growth. Thus, like the majority of BIDs, SBEG's activities are arranged around the 'safe, green and clean' agenda that, as Mitchell and Staeheli (2006: 153) note, has seen the creation of clean and safe 'pseudo-private spaces'. These have become a key feature in the redevelopment of urban spaces 'under a system that makes accumulation - the increase of value – the primary reason for maintaining or improving the public spaces of the city' (Mitchell and Staeheli, 2006: 153).

SBEG is heavily involved in the planning and delivery of security-related services and employs a full-time security coordinator, funded through Section 106 'Planning Gain' contributions derived from the London Eye ferris wheel, and who also chairs a security forum, *South Bank Business Watch*. While issues of security have long been a concern for the group, reflecting the dramatic increase in governmental interest in urban security measures following the September 11 terrorist attacks in 2001 (see Home Office and DCLG, 2010), ensuring the safety of visitors to the South Bank has become a core concern. The area is part of *Community Safety Zone* (CSZ) which an interviewee described as, "a police initiative, in consultation with businesses...it's a police initiative but the businesses sort of run it." Within the CSZ sits part of the *Government Security Zone* (GSZ) which surrounds the Palace of Westminster and extends south east to include part of the South Bank area. As an interviewee commented, this "means we get additional police resources, why the South Bank team is in place itself is because of counter-terrorism measures".

Alongside the planning of counter-terrorism measures, the forum also oversees strategy on crime prevention, the fear of crime, antisocial behaviour, and emergency planning. It also operates a CCTV usage group, wherein member organisations and the police have an information and data-sharing agreement, tied to the Data Protection Act. As a forum member explained in interview, the group is,

> "unique, it's never been done before. The local authorities have set them up before, these data information sharing agreements between the police and other partners, but we're the first private sector initiative to run such a scheme".

SBEG is also involved in the management of a private security patrol service, the *South Bank Patrol*, which is jointly funded by local authority and SBEG members. As a SBEG staff member explained, this is also novel,

> "Normally a warden type service would be funded by the local authority and it'd be local authority's remit. Lambeth did have one until a couple of years ago but they took the money out of paying for community wardens...and invested it, into paying for PCSO [Police Community Support Officers] in the borough. Which I think is a...monumental mistake...once you start funding the Metropolitan Police to provide you with resource...you lose all executive control over that. Whilst you've got a private warden, a community warden service, you deploy them, you decide where they'll go."

Reducing 'low-level' crimes, of the type targeted by the SB Patrol, has been a key goal for government, and is also a central feature of the world-class place agenda which calls for the reduction of 'anti-social behaviour' as part of a drive to secure inner-urban areas. The 2003 *Anti-social Behaviour Act* includes powers to designate a Dispersal Zone in areas 'where there has been significant and persistent anti-social behaviour and where groups of people have caused intimidation, alarm or distress to members of the public' (HM Government, 2003, pt.4). SBEG was instrumental in the setting up of the *Waterloo Dispersal Zone*. Introduced in 2009, it aimed to tackle the problem of street drinking in and around Waterloo Station and gives 'police and Community Support Officers...the power to require a person to stop drinking and...confiscate alcohol. Failure to comply with an officer's request could result in arrest and/or a fine' (WQBA, undated: no page).

Such statements indicate that, while the type of schemes operated by business-led bodies such as BIDs have been dismissed by some as ineffectual in addressing the 'big challenges' (see chapter 2), business groups' involvement in local security and crime prevention initiatives has a significant impact upon the governance of urban space. Many see the increasing involvement of public-private partnerships in urban management as part of the

privatisation of public space, arguing that cities have become increasingly 'undemocratic' places (Low and Smith, 2006, see also Minton, 2009). Others point to research that suggests business-lobbying is influencing where dispersal zones are being set up, as a recent Joseph Rowntree report suggests,

> The geographical and social use of dispersal orders does not correspond straightforwardly to the distribution of victimisation risks. This suggests certain communities and businesses are able to influence dispersal order authorisation, primarily as a means of drawing police resources into an area (Crawford, 2007: 2, see also Crawford, 2009).

While SBEG's operational 'vision', is underpinned by the need to increase local economic opportunities through (not un-controversial) activities such as the security programmes outlined above, it also strongly invokes the softer notion of *place-shaping* (see figure 5.4). In suggesting that improvements to the physical realm will create a positive spatial identity for the South Bank, the implicit assumption is that this will, in turn, create the conditions for cultural enjoyment, learning, further investment and the increased *wellbeing* of employees, visitors and local residents. These are goals that are also enshrined in New Labour's place-shaping agenda, which envisages local government and other actors working together to 'promote the general wellbeing of a community and its citizens' (Lyons, 2007: 3)

Figure 5.4. SBEG's vision

We will promote and improve the South Bank neighbourhood for the benefit of those who work, study or live in the area, as well as the millions who visit each year, with the aim of making South Bank:

- A desirable destination for cultural pursuits, business, education and leisure
- A place which supports and encourages investment and business growth
- A place with a flourishing and cohesive residential community
- A place which welcomes visitors
- A friendly, clean, colourful, safe, dynamic and diverse neighbourhood

Source: SBEG (2009a: no page)

While this vision is, through its use of terms such as 'cohesive', consciously orientated towards New Labour's urban agenda, SBEG's operational vision has changed relatively little since the early 1990s. This was when a group of representatives from nine local organisations, including the South Bank Centre, National Theatre and Coin Street Community Builders, began to hold meetings to discuss how to address what they

perceived as the South Bank's 'degraded' public realm. As one founder member commented,

> "prior to 1999/2000 it was a dire environment. You know, you had people sleeping rough under QEH [Queen Elizabeth Hall], you had no restaurants of any calibre or quality…".

Reflecting Abercombie and Forshaw's (1943) comments made around half a century earlier in the County of London Plan, members' contention was that the quality of the public realm failed to do justice to the South Bank's prominent geographical position. As a founder member suggested,

> "[Y]ou did not have the glitzy development along the South Bank. South Bank was actually quite dirty, quite unpleasant, quite unfriendly, and in some respects quite dangerous."

The South Bank's 'image problem' created difficulties for local businesses, who described bussing their employees in and out of Waterloo Station so that they did not have to negotiate what was referred to as the "cardboard city" of homeless people living in the area's underpasses and undercrofts. Similar issues were expressed by representatives of the cultural organisations whose visitors were, they argued, put off from staying in and around the South Bank after a visit to the theatre or concert. As a founder member commented, "it wasn't a place to sit and linger". It was once local business and cultural organisations realised their shared interest in improving the public realm that the idea of working together to instigate change began to make sense. As a former SBEG staff member explained, prior to this there was little interaction between the two groups,

> "And I think the interests of the private sector employers and the cultural institutions, who themselves were originally quite siloed and quite indifferent, if not antagonistic to one another, they started to realise they had common interests too".

A secondary, but equally important shared interest was in local land values which the poor state of the public realm was perceived to be depressing. As a founder SBEG member explained, the logical solution seemed to be making a modest investment in enhancing the quality of the public realm thus unlocking the area's regeneration potential,

> "I got a valuer to value the impact of [the proposed public realm improvements] on surrounding office buildings ...and it turned out it put them up by about five pound per square foot, which say for the IBM building, represented fourteen million pounds' worth of capital value".

Convinced of the area's commercial potential, SBEG members set about trying to attract inward investment to fund a series of public realm improvements that, in generating further inward investment, could be used to support other, socially-orientated goals. As a founder member explained, the emergent SBEG agenda was underpinned by this logic,

> "It was very much [built] on the argument that if you take a strategic vision of the South Bank you will recognise the importance [of the area], this [regeneration] money could help, [it] shouldn't be used to solve [all] the issues we were concerned about, environmentally and all the rest, but it can be a major release, a lever, a trigger, to get more private sector engagement, to attract money from other sources, and in particular we can have a really vibrant social programme in it, which will address some of the real community needs".

Despite the claim that economic revitalisation will meet 'community needs', SBEG's conception of the South Bank as a place requiring regeneration is, inevitably, a partial one based upon its members conceptions of local place, and their views about what improvements should be made. A key part of SBEG's approach has been to emphasise the 'rational', that is the logical, achievable and mutually-beneficial nature, of their proposals, an approach which Flyvbjerg (1998) shows to be key in the resolution of debates in urban planning and development.

In consolidating a rational and collective vision, one of the group's first formal activities was the commissioning of an *Urban Design Strategy* (UDS). As a founder member explained, "the purpose of that really was to try and demonstrate...how you could produce a coherent plan for the area that would make it more than the sum of its parts". This extract, from the group's brief to design consultants Llewelyn-Davies and Imagination captures its members' feelings about the urgent need for regeneration,

> The South Bank is home to prestigious national and international corporations, to Europe's largest centre for the arts and media, and to a growing residential population. With the opening of Waterloo International it becomes London's gateway to Europe. Its location beside the River Thames and mid-way between the City and West End gives the area tremendous advantages. However it is generally perceived as a bleak and hostile area, lacking shops and street level activity, and difficult for pedestrians to find their way about. This perception needs to change and the area become:
>
> • a desirable destination for cultural pursuits, business and pleasure;
>
> • a place of work with particular emphasis on the media and cultural industries;
>
> • a place with a flourishing and cohesive residential community;
>
> • an open space with riverside walkways and views;
>
> • a meeting place; and, a friendly, clean, colourful, safe, dynamic and diverse area.

The language of collaboration, a key feature of the group's current 'vision', is already in evidence here. However, while SBEG members were now convinced of the benefits of public realm improvement, the residential community was less certain, as a former SBEG employee recalled,

> "[the UDS] was about improvements in the public realm, safety in the public realm, making the streets attractive. Yeah. Very important. Quite controversial because some of the community groups were very unhappy about some of the proposals, so you know, it wasn't all sweetness and light by any means. But, if you like, there was a broad consensus".

In making a case for the mutual benefits to be gained from public realm regeneration projects, SBEG positioned its members' agenda in line with the aims of new policy initiatives such as the SRB. Launched in 1994, the SRB enshrined a partnership approach and represented an opportunity for SBEG to start delivering its vision for the regeneration of the South Bank. It was also around this time that the group began to formalise its activities and, in 1995, following the group's registration as a limited company, SBEG's members elected a Chairman, the director of Sainsbury's Plc, which was, at that time, a major local employer. They also recruited a part-time, female Chief Executive, who was supported by a small team of staff working from a leased space in the Coin Street Community Builders' offices in Doon Street.

Together, these well-connected individuals sought to secure political 'buy-in' for SBEG's vision of the South Bank's future. As a founding member of SBEG recalled, the group's timing was fortuitous in that,

> "the government was just setting up regional offices, in particular the Government Office for London [GOL], and so the director came down, met with myself...and said, 'Look, we're not prepared to put in more money via Lambeth.' Because of what had happened with Brixton City Challenge, where they were thinking of pulling the plug, 'But if you formalise yourself and take the lead then we will put money behind you.'"

GOL's reluctance to work with Lambeth Council reflected the widely-held perception that the Borough was dysfunctional. During the 1980s it was dubbed part of the 'loony left' along with Ken Livingstone's GLC, and into the 1990s Lambeth remained politically isolated. This was exacerbated by a series of investigations into financial irregularities and poor management practices at the council that included the handling of the Brixton City Challenge[18]. Putting money into the South Bank via a business-led partnership such as SBEG

[18] The £189 million Brixton City Challenge programme was established in 1993 with the aim of creating 'communities [that] will flourish in good homes, be healthy and safe, and participate in the

seemed like a more attractive option, particularly as relations between the GOL and SBEG were already, thanks to personal connections, established. As a founder member explained in interview,

> "And at that time...I was working quite closely with someone in the Government Office for London[19], [and] I nudged along the private sector people and she nudged along the local authorities, and then part of my job was to make sure that the politicians bought into it, so the leaders of the council, the MPs, the local councillors, all the rest of it."

Encouraged by the positive reception their agenda was beginning to receive from government bodies, a former SBEG staff member recalled,

> "at very short notice we wrote a single regeneration budget bid...If I'm entirely objective about it I would have said... [it was] quite a good application but in purely objective terms [it was] probably as a result of passionate lobbying was the reason we got it, and there's nothing wrong with that".

The £9 million SRB funds, awarded to the group in 1995, were used to deliver the first phase of the UDS. This involved a series of improvements to the 'Spine Route', a road connecting Upper Ground and Belvedere Road and the main artery between the riverside businesses and cultural attractions and Waterloo Station (see figure 3.1 and figure 5.5). The project involved installing new signage, banners and lighting, new paving and traffic calming measures transforming, in SBEG's words, 'a former 'rat run'...into a traffic-calmed boulevard with trees, wide pavements and warm lighting' (SBEG, 1998: 3). The improvements also included the installation of a coordinated CCTV system, a key feature in many of SBEG's public realm schemes.

changes that will take place' (Rahman, 1995: no page). However, the programme was criticised for its focus on the regeneration of central Brixton and which failed to trigger the private investment it was hoped would, in turn, bring benefits to the wider Lambeth area (Rahman, 1995).

[19] The Government Office for London was one of the regional government offices established in 1994 and tasked with lobbying on behalf of London in the development of central government policy. It played a key role in the allocation of SRB funds in London. The current Coalition government has recently announced the abolition of the regional government offices as part of wide ranging planning reforms (see chapter 8).

Figure 5.5. Spine Route improvements, delivered in 1997

Source: Lifschutz Davidson (1997: 14)

An indication of the high esteem in which the group's work was held was provided by the opening of the regenerated Spine Route in July 1997 by newly elected Prime Minister Tony Blair. In pronouncing his support for SBEG's approach, which had seen the UDS widely consulted upon in the community, Blair commented, 'This is a model of how local people and private business can work in partnership. You can mix the two together and create a community' (SBEG, 1998: 3). This ringing political endorsement demonstrates how closely aligned SBEG and New Labour's approaches to partnership-working were, and indeed, ensuring that the group's agenda is sensitised to and embedded within the wider political context remains a core task for the group today.

Aware of the growing governmental emphasis on 'best-value' and 'evidence-based' policy, the group sought to communicate its other successes, once again (re)presenting itself as a dynamic and yet also rational force for action in an otherwise chaotic landscape,

> South Bank Employer's Group has proved that it can deliver innovative, business-led solutions to complex city problems. It raises more real private sector funds than comparable partnerships. It makes things happen in situations where either no-one is taking responsibility, or where there are a large number of parties, resources and agendas involved (SBEG, 1998: 5).

In addition to enhancing SBEG's credibility, Blair's endorsement also provided further momentum for the rollout of the group's 'menu' of regeneration projects. Further proposals for a series of schemes in and around the riverside area were published as part of the 1997 *South Bank Riverside Walkway Landscape Strategy* (Lifschutz Davidson, 1997: 1). Invoking the South Bank's earlier incarnation as a place for recreation (see chapter 4), the report states,

> The opportunity now exists to reinterpret London's pleasure gardens by enhancing the South Bank riverside walkway and its associated landscaped areas. The present run down walkway can be transformed to provide a magnificent riverside promenade befitting its location at the heart of London.

Images were contained in the report by way of emphasising this point, and, when viewed next to an image taken in 2009 (figure 5.6), show the effect that new paving, street furniture and signage has had upon the public realm.

Figure 5.6. Riverside walkway, before and (below) after, public realm regeneration

Source: Lifschutz Davidson (1997: 12)

Source: Author's own photograph

The riverside walkway strategy also called for a series of related 'environmental improvement schemes' including the creation of two pedestrian footbridges adjacent to the Hungerford railway bridge, deemed essential to connect the area to Charing Cross station on the northern bank of the Thames, and 'Waterloo Place', a proposal for a new public square in the foreground of Waterloo Station now known as *Waterloo City Square* and yet to be fully delivered (see chapters 6 and 7). The difficulties in delivering these ambitious schemes is a recurrent theme in the South Bank case, and progress might have been slower yet had SBEG not succeeded in coordinating, as the Chair of the specially-formed *Waterloo Project Board* (WPB), a bid for a further £19 million of SRB round 6 funding, awarded in 2001.

The SBEG-led bid, *Opportunity into Reality: a New Waterloo*, drew heavily upon the *global city discourse* (Sassen, 2001) in suggesting that the South Bank had an, as yet unrealised, potential to be a globally-significant centre for culture, tourism and industry (see figure 5.7).

Figure 5.7. Waterloo Project Board SRB-funded project, round 6

OPPORTUNITY INTO REALITY: A NEW WATERLOO

This project focuses on the development of key sites between Waterloo and Westminster Bridges, creating a world class location at the heart of London that will deliver benefits to those who live in, work in and visit the wider Waterloo and South Bank areas.

Key Outcomes: 5000 new jobs; a world class arts venue for London; new mixed use leisure development around Shell Centre; Improved links with the area; high quality public spaces, long term area management arrangements, local organisations engaged in regeneration programmes.
Costs: SRB Y1: £110k; SRB Total £ 19,005k; Scheme Total: £114,123k

Source: DCLG (2000: no page)

SBEG's increasingly 'global' regeneration vision was also outlined in a second *Urban Design Strategy* (UDS), consulted upon in 2000 and then published in 2002, and which reflected the group's expanding ambitions. This was manifest physically; its operational area was extended southwards to Lambeth Bridge, meaning that it now encompassed St Thomas's Hospital (see figure 3.1). Institutionally, the group was now referring to itself as a 'non-profit' organisation, reflecting the parlance of the time. Politically, as this statement from Chairman Ian Coull indicates, the group was also aiming upwards,

> We hope that this strategy will not only guide South Bank Employers' Group's priorities for investment but also influence the Government, the GLA, Transport for London, Lambeth and Southwark Councils, developers, and all others whose actions, taken together, will determine what it is like to live in, work in or visit South Bank in the 21st Century (SBEG, 2002: 1).

These ambitions were, at least in part, achieved. After concerted efforts to bring the UDS to the attention of local authority, regional government and other neighbourhood representatives, it became a point of reference for other strategies and plans for the South Bank, as a SBEG member recalled in interview,

> "...it then meant that everyone else's plans, individual plans, could be referenced against the urban design strategy, and it then enabled the South Bank Employers' Group to support those individual initiatives, which made it…perceived to be lower risk and something that Lambeth Council could find it easier to support".

The Waterloo SRB, which ran from 2001-2007, represented a key opportunity to further strengthen inter-institutional linkages. SBEG established a new governance structure to oversee the spending of SRB funds, which, ostensibly at least, saw the group assume a less central role. With Lambeth Council acting as 'accountable body', the Waterloo Project Board (WPB), a body consisting of SBEG representatives, 9 elected local residents and 8 representatives from local community organisations, was set up to oversee the allocation of the funds. The Waterloo Community Regeneration Trust (WCRT), a committee elected by local residents, was created at the same time to distribute a £4.5 million 'Community Chest' to local community groups. As an ex-SBEG employee recalled, the inclusion of residents in both the WPB and WCRT was a conscious attempt to improve relations between SBEG and the South Bank's residential community and to try and develop a more consensual way of working,

> "[SBEG] was responsible for overseeing it all but we set up our own mechanism. So... what we did was set up a separate board of governance drawn from the local community that oversaw all the community spend. [The resident's] suspicion was 'it's all gonna be run by the private sector'…So we very deliberately made clear it wasn't and they had their own [project board]".

However, as a community representative suggested in interview, while SBEG's title was that of WPB's 'delivery agent', in reality the group retained close control over the allocation of SRB funds,

> "[T]he SRB forced everyone to come together around SBEG, they controlled the purse-strings and...literally, day to day you had to give the bid to them...if you wanted to get fifty thousand pounds for something you had to go through their processes".

This closely controlled process ensured that SBEG members' interests were furthered as part of the programme. As this extract from SBEG's (2002) business report and accounts attests, there was a conscious effort from the group to align SRB outcomes with its own priorities,

> SBEG will also seek wherever reasonable to secure its own objectives through these [SRB] funding streams, bringing together the staff and board to identify synergies, and to maximise benefits and influence.

Thus, while the SRB programme contained a wide-range of projects, many of which were consciously community-orientated to appease both the GLA (the SRB-awarding body), Lambeth Council and local residents - who had voiced concerns that the original bid was, as one interviewee described it "too corporate" - a significant proportion of the total funds (21%) was spent on improving the physical environment of the riverside area, reflecting SBEG members' core concerns (see appendix 13). Significantly, while the end of project report (WPB, 2007) makes no mention of the final number of jobs created, it makes several references[20] to the cross-sector partnerships created during the programme's life span, suggesting that creating a less-conflictual climate was a central goal of the programme. It also notes that, '[t]he main achievement of these organisations has been their success in forging new partnerships which will long outlive SRB funding'. This statement captures the emphasis placed upon collaborative working in the South Bank today. While the programmes reviewed here represented an opportunity for SBEG to begin delivering its regeneration agenda, they also represented an equally valuable opportunity to engage other, traditionally hostile groups, in the formation of a more 'collaborative' regeneration agenda.

[20] In the 22-page document, a total of 19 references to 'partnership' are made.

5.5. Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the operational structure, membership, core activities, aims and early delivery history of SBEG. It has suggested that, while uniquely embedded in the South Bank locale, the group's evolution draws attention a number of important trends in relation to contemporary regeneration. The group's *hybrid* or *reflexive* organisational status, which sees it operate across the boundaries of 'public' and 'private', reflects the growing involvement of non-state institutions, with similarly fluid institutional forms, in urban regeneration and governance. SBEG's stated commitment to the values of partnership-working mirrors the relentless promotion of partnership under New Labour, and its claim to represent the interests of the wider South Bank community is suggestive of the government's pursuit of a more consensual approach to planning.

As the chapter has shown, the contention that the South Bank is a valuable commercial, cultural and visitor centre that, through further economic growth, can become a 'better' place for business, employees, visitors and residents, has been positioned by SBEG as a commonsensical and deliverable regeneration agenda. Yet this is based upon a partial interpretation of the South Bank's development potential, one that, as the next chapter also demonstrates, has been actively politicised by SBEG through lobbying and networking activities. This calls into question the group's ability to act as a 'neutral' community broker, claims that, as this chapter has shown, are central to SBEG's organisational rationality and which inform its wide-ranging, but not uncontroversial, portfolio of activities.

The chapter has also highlighted the powerful role that imaginations of place can play in determining the direction of regeneration planning. Brought together into a coherent and purportedly 'rational' agenda around the regeneration of the public realm, SBEG members' visions of what the South Bank *could be*, expressed in documents such as the UDS, became widely-supported by key bodies such as the Government Office for London. The next chapter explores how this was dependent upon SBEG's insertion into the wider political-institutional framework. It develops the argument that in ensuring its agenda received the requisite political 'buy-in', SBEG has engaged in various forms of consensus building that has shaped and restricted the parameters of debate in relation to matters of regeneration and place-shaping.

Chapter 6. Creating consensus: The (post)politics of partnership regeneration

6.1. Introduction

This chapter explores how, in recent years, partnership working, a central feature of New Labour's urban policy agenda, has become the favoured mechanism for the delivery of regeneration in the South Bank. SBEG has been in the vanguard of forging strategic alliances between stakeholders and views a partnership approach as the most effective way to overcome conflicts of the past and develop a sustainable, inclusive and, above all, *deliverable* regeneration programme for the South Bank. However, others, such as Baeten (2000, 2009), caution that partnership working can mask an exclusionary politics that permits consensual development visions to be installed. This post-political process, Baeten (2009) asserts, contradicts Third Way statements about how a consensus approach represents a more *discursive* or *dialogical* form of democracy, and instead has actually *restricted debate* about local (re)development.

Baeten's claims are explored empirically here, and in so doing, the chapter demonstrates how SBEG members' development visions relate to those held by other local stakeholders. Indeed, as Healey (2002: 1779) suggests, place-based development interests are almost always diverse, often contradictory, and, in shaping places, 'all kinds of ideas about the city jostle and collide'. In the South Bank, the Waterloo Community Development Group (WCDG) is shown to have a different vision of regeneration to SBEG's; one that is less-development and 'growth' focussed, and instead centres upon the provision of affordable housing and improved residential facilities mirroring the 'homes not offices' rallying call of the Coin Street campaigns (see chapter 4).

While WCDG's agenda is consciously orientated towards New Labour's *Sustainable Communities Plan* (SCs Plan), it is SBEG and its partners' vision of local place that has become dominant in shaping (re)development politics in the South Bank. The chapter considers the reasons for this, and in so doing, shows how SBEG has used a process of rationalization to position alternative visions, such as the WCDG's, as unrealistic and outdated. As Mouffe (2005) and Dyrberg (2009) have observed, the positioning of political opponents as 'traditionalists' is a feature of the Third Way politics in which consensual, non-conflictual or 'post-political' solutions to questions of governance are preferred.

As the previous chapter has shown, the notion that the South Bank is a commercially valuable, cultural and visitor centre, ripe for further economic growth, has been a regeneration vision espoused by SBEG. In generating support for this agenda, the group has argued that public realm improvements are the best way to deliver the growth that will benefit all, a contention that has been positioned as a rational interpretation, or 'reading off', of the area's assets. This chapter explores how SBEG members and staff have used a range of techniques, such as political lobbying and the creation of new governance structures such as the South Bank Partnership (SBP), to 'rationalize' its members' own agenda, and to exert influence over local development strategy-making and planning processes.

The chapter shows how this has involved the embedding of SBEG into what Peck (1998: 7) terms, the 'local institutional milieux'. After outlining the bodies that make up the South Bank's institutional landscape, the mechanisms, or what Rose and Miller (1992) term, the *technologies of government*, used by the group to establish itself as a key player in the South Bank's regeneration are assessed. These fall broadly into two main categories; formal and informal. First, SBEG's involvement in governance mechanisms such as Lambeth First (LSP) is described. It is argued that engagement in these formal institutions, that are often either endorsed or hosted by government bodies, has been part of the group's strategy to address the 'democratic design problems' of legitimacy, consent and accountability associated with the emergence of *third-party government bodies* such as SBEG (Justice and Skelcher, 2009: 742).

In particular, the group's decision to create the SBP has been important in fostering what Giddens' (1994) terms *active trust* between SBEG and other local stakeholders. This has bolstered the legitimacy of its claims to represent the interests of the community beyond its membership. It also, in SBEG's words, gives the group a "democratic mandate" for action, a claim that this research problematises. The chapter shows how SBEG has also used other, more informal, techniques such as political lobbying and elite networking, to garner support for its activities and to access regeneration funding, activities which cast its claims to be a 'neutral' or non-political body in further doubt.

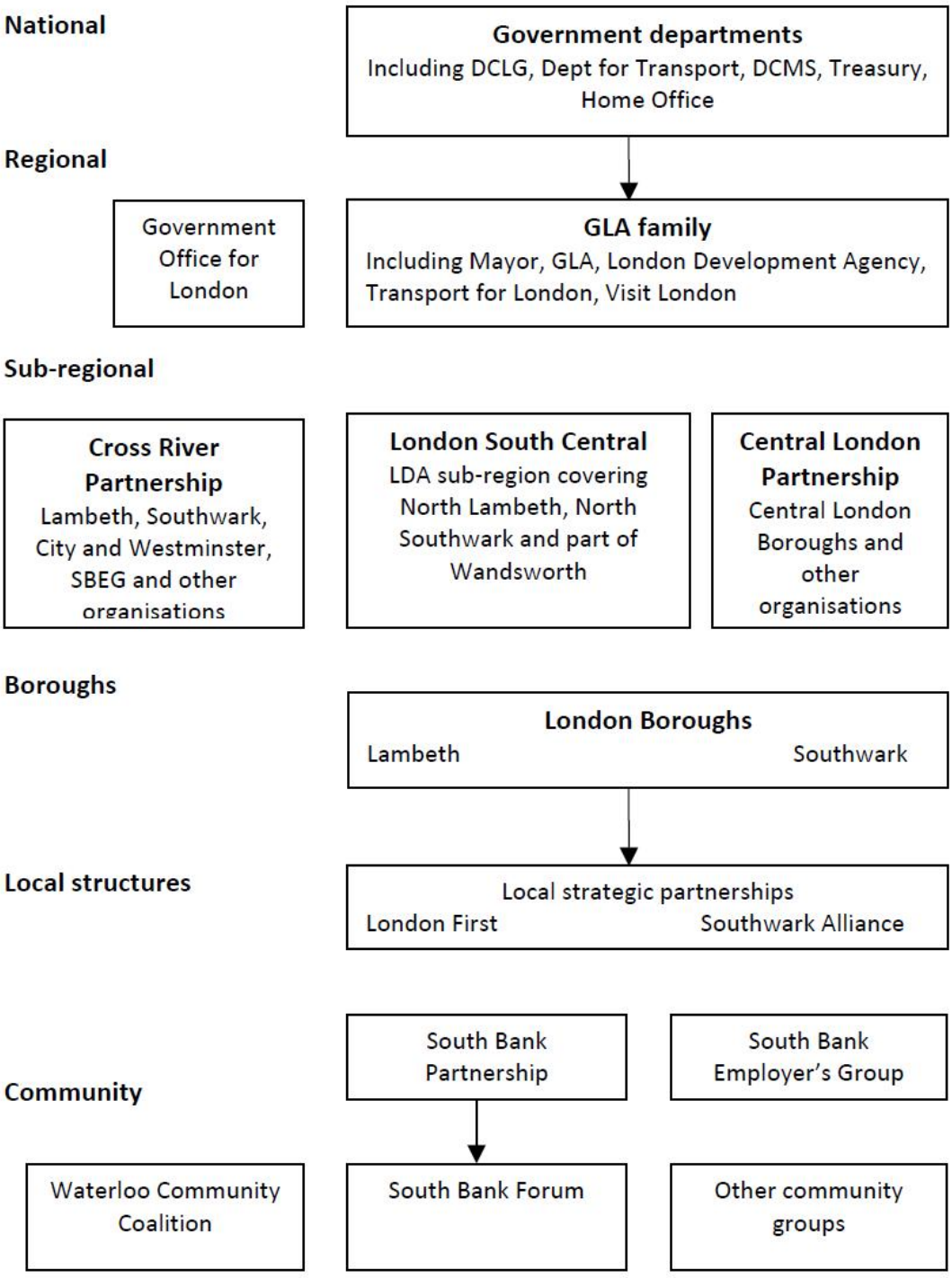
6.2. The South Bank's institutional landscape

As chapter 4 has suggested, the South Bank's institutional landscape is characterised by much complexity. This section describes the organisations with a stake in the area's governance, and suggests that SBEG's hybridised institutional form has meant it is better able to negotiate these complexities than other neighbourhood bodies. This has proved important in determining the relative (in)capacities of local groups, and, in particular, their relative (in)ability to engage and partner with, a range of multi-scalar, private and public bodies.

As Jessop (2005: 1) contends, in recent years, the social world has seen the 'increased fuzziness, contestability, and de-differentiation of institutional boundaries' (see also Markusen, 2003, Allmendinger and Haughton, 2009). The repositioning of the national state, economies and societies, which, as Jessop (2005: 1-2) notes, are no longer the 'main axes and reference points in societal organization' has been a contributory factor in this 'blurring', that has led to an 'increased complexity of spatial and scalar relations and horizons of action'. Representing or characterising the complex and multi-scalar nature of contemporary governance arrangements is an increasingly challenging task but is one which SBEG has attempted in order identify and clarify its relationship with other stakeholders.

The context in which SBEG operates is represented by figure 6.1, a reproduction of a diagram produced by SBEG that illustrates the different bodies engaged in the South Bank's governance. This is done hierarchically, with central government departments, such as the *Department for Communities and Local Government* (DCLG) shown in the upper tier, followed by regional bodies such as the Government Office for London (GOL), sub regional organisations such as the *Cross River Partnership* (CRP), and then Borough, local tier, and community groups (see appendix 14 for a description of organisations).

Figure 6.1. The context within which SBEG operates



Source: Adapted from SBEG (2007a: no page)

While figure 6.1 tells us little about the form and function of the organisations represented within different scalar categories, it does offer some insight into how SBEG perceives the institutional landscape within which it operates. In representing the bodies it works with in such a manner, SBEG suggests that while this landscape is complex, it is orderable. 'Ordering' is by scalar category, rather than by interest or sector, which suggests it is aware of the multi-scalar nature of governance in the South Bank, and of the different interests in the area represented by community, local, regional and national-tier bodies. This is borne out by the research, and was also expressed by a community representative in interview who commented,

> "it's one of the few places in the entire country where all levels of government want to dip their fingers in. So you've got the local community...structures and neighbourhood structures...you've got other ancillary statutory bodies, like BIDs and like SBEG, and then you've got the council, then you've got regional level because the [area is] one of the...areas of intensification in the Mayor of London's Plan, and then of course being the South Bank and just across the river [from Westminster] and the largest arts centre and all the rest of it, national government...periodically sticks their fingers in and makes statements".

SBEG's positioning of itself in figure 6.1 also reveals something about how the group perceives its stake in local governance, relative to other organisations. SBEG's location below the LSPs, bodies which it predates by some 10 years, suggests an awareness of the importance of this new governance tier, although LSPs are, at least ostensibly, supposed to be supra-borough level, bringing together agencies both within and beyond the Borough boundary (see chapter 7). SBEG's location alongside the SBP is suggestive of an equal and interactive relationship, while its positioning above the 'community' tier is intriguing given its claims to represent the wider community 'interest' (see chapter 5). The group's positioning of itself above (although very close to) the community tier perhaps reflects its capacity to 'scale-up' (and down) London governance tiers by representing the community, local, regional, and even national or global benefits, that it suggests flow from its activities (see chapter 5). This process is smoothed by the group's ability to take advantage of its members' personal contacts through various networking activities (see 6.3).

This flexible operational style has enabled SBEG to build strong relationships with regional and central government departments as well as other key political figures at the borough and local scale. While the group is keen to emphasise this as a marker of its political influence (see chapter 7), its status as a neighbourhood champion also remains important

in legitimising claims to an in-depth understanding of local issues. Aligning itself with the community scale of governance therefore remains key.

Figure 6.1, while revealing some detail about the inter-institutional workings of the South Bank, tells us little or nothing about the relations *between* different organisational bodies. For Rose and Miller (1992: 174), gaining an understanding of these processes is important since, 'political power is exercised today through a profusion of shifting alliances between diverse authorities'. Despite this, they argue that the oppositional political vocabulary of 'public and private', 'government and market', continues to be favoured (Rose and Miller, 1992). Rigidly hierarchical representations of scale, as seen in figure 6.1, imply there is little or no interaction between community-level organisations and 'higher tier' organisations such as local or central government departments, and also suggest only top-down power relations occur. Such assumptions have been challenged in recent years, as part of a critical reappraisal of the construction and representation of scalar relations.

As Brenner (2000: 366) highlights, much of this research has been in response to 'major transformations in the institutional and geographical organization not only of the urban scale, but also of the supraurban scalar hierarchies and interscalar networks in which cities are embedded' (see also Cox, 1984, 1986, Massey, 1985, 1993, Smith, 1984, Swyngedouw, 1997, 2000). The underlying assertion of many of these writings is, as Marston (2000: 220) indicates,

> …that scale is not necessarily a preordained hierarchical framework for ordering the world – local, regional, national and global. It is instead a contingent outcome of the tensions that exist between structural forces and the practices of human agents.

These tensions are largely obscured from diagrams and tables, and yet, as Marston (2000) suggests, appreciating the extent and nature of inter-relationships between agents and structural forces are vital since they are constitutive of space. In the South Bank, the relationship between different factions of the community and structural forces, such as uneven access to regeneration funding, has been characterised by a series of tensions that have shaped the South Bank's institutional landscape in various ways (see chapter 4). As chapter 5 has also indicated, several local stakeholders, including SBEG members, suggested, in interview, that Lambeth and Southwark Councils' lack of engagement in the area had created a governance "vacuum". This, interviewees claimed, was partly responsible for the proliferation of non-governmental groups at the local scale engaged in the planning and development of the area. The (perceived) lack of governmental

involvement also curtailed the flow of resources for the regeneration in the area, resulting in a contested governance space,

> "The [South Bank and Waterloo] was...cowboy territory, there was no sheriff there was just a lot of cowboys running around, and ourselves included. Sort of playing little mini sheriffs and trying to make up the laws and trying to make up what the planning should be, and there was no authority, no Lambeth saying, 'This is what it should be... And they [Lambeth] didn't dare to get involved in this area, and I would say...to a large extent they haven't since".

This was a viewpoint expressed by several SBEG members, who suggested that because of their historical lack of local engagement, the Borough authorities remain poorly positioned to understand the area's unique set of needs. As one SBEG member commented,

> "…unfortunately Lambeth doesn't...seem to concentrate much of its efforts on the hugely used and populated area, which is the north of the borough. They've got huge demands and requirements elsewhere in the borough, which are perfectly understood...but our concern is the commercial, what was [the South Bank] described as? 'The engine room of Lambeth'...It really is commercially critical to Lambeth to get it right..."

Others suggested, similarly, that the local government perceived the South Bank to be a relatively affluent, 'central London' location, compared to other more 'needy' parts of their boroughs, and directed their resources accordingly without being sensitised to the area's capacity to, at least potentially, deliver economic wealth to the wider Borough areas. This was a sentiment acknowledged in interview by a local authority representative who explained,

> "the council's role in physical regeneration [has been]...about intervening where the market won't sort itself out. And for some time we...regarded Waterloo in that way, in so far as...it's not a priority, Brixton's a priority, Streatham's a priority, because they're in decline, and if we don't do something, then we've missed out on our responsibilities to do something about it".

As chapter 5 has shown, the lack of strong local (and regional, following the demise of the GLC) authority in the South Bank meant not only had the area's commercial potential been overlooked, but that, for non-state bodies keen do something about it, "[the] opportunity was [there], there was a big gap". This, at one level, 'state-centric' comment, resonates with Peck and Tickell's (1995: 63) observation that, the 'disorganization of local politics' created by funding cuts to local government under the Thatcher government, resulted in the 'local political space for business people to become involved in local policy and politics'.

While former governments were positively predisposed towards working with businesses in local development, SBEG's foray into local politics was not welcomed by all. As chapter 4 has demonstrated, there has been a long history of conflict between businesses and local residents in the South Bank. More specifically, local community representatives spoke of a feeling of "hostility" from some residents towards the incoming office and cultural developments during the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, a feeling that persisted well into the 1990s. Indeed, despite efforts, led by SBEG and its associates, to move beyond these tensions, points of strain between user different groups remain (see chapter 7). As an ex-SBEG staff member described in interview, long-running disputes about redevelopment projects such as Jubilee Gardens had seen some SBEG members become "very frustrated by the antagonism of some of the community groups [who] won't have anything to do with big business".

6.3. Instituting SBEG: Tools, techniques and mechanisms

This section suggests that the group's desire to overcome these antagonisms was, in large part, dependent upon SBEG becoming seen as a trusted community voice and not only as a representative of "big business" interests. In so doing, the group has made efforts to become an established part of the South Bank's institutional landscape. Various techniques and mechanisms have been used by the group to accrue legitimacy and also *active trust* which depends 'on the recognition of personal integrity' (Giddens, 1994: 131). The acquisition of trust from some (but by no means all) local stakeholders has had further positive consequences for the group, namely the opportunity to further embed its agenda within local area strategy. The techniques used to do this fall broadly into two categories; 'informal' techniques such as behind-the-scenes lobbying and networking, and more 'formal' activities such as the group's engagement in, and even creation of, governance bodies such as the SBP.

Rose and Miller's (1992) writings on the technologies of government provide a useful framework to analyse the ways in which SBEG's agenda has been developed and mobilised within the South Bank's wider governance structure. In referring to the 'strategies, techniques and procedures through which different forces seek to render programmes operable, and by means of which a multitude of connections are established between the aspirations of authorities and the activities of individuals and groups', Rose and Miller (1992: 183) suggest that it is through these technologies of government that 'political

rationalities and the programmes of government that articulate them become capable of deployment'.

As chapter 6 has shown, SBEG's founder members were skilled at making connections between what was a small but disjointed group of local cultural and business representatives, each of whom had their own concerns about the South Bank's environs. By highlighting the mutual benefits to be gained through collaborative action, SBEG's founder members brought these organisations' aspirations and interests together, articulating them in a coherent and deliverable programme of public realm improvements (see chapter 5). The personal attributes of core group members is not to be underestimated in this process, and as an interviewee noted,

> "[A]ll credit to [a SBEG founder member], who's always had a vision for the area and has a passion for the area and has always wanted to see this sort of working together".

The SBEG member described in the quote above is also a local resident, suggesting that representing local interests as either wholly 'business' or 'community' focussed is problematic (see also chapter 5). In interview, a former SBEG employee reflected on the importance of leadership in the organisation's early years and commented that the personal characteristics of the first Chairman had been important in establishing the group's position within the existing institutional landscape,

> "…he was quite high profile and quite a heavy hitter. And he was a smashing bloke...I think people like him had a huge vision, huge connectivity, because he really did have clout within the corporate world."

As Bourdieu (1991: 190) notes, the role of these individuals, in acting as spokespeople on behalf of their membership is significant since, '[t]he spokesperson helps to produce [the power of the group] by lending it a voice recognized as legitimate in the political field'. These key individuals mobilised their personal and commercial contacts to lobby for support of the SBEG agenda and, to use Rose and Miller's (1992) term, 'deploy' the group's vision for the South Bank's future more widely. As Bourdieu (1991: 190) suggests, personal authority can also lend agendas a greater sense of rationality and truth, or as he puts it,

> The truth of a promise or a prognosis depends not only on the truthfulness but also on the authority of the person who utters it – that is, on his capacity to make people believe in his truthfulness and his authority.

While SBEG's well-connected membership certainly helped the group communicate its vision, it is important to note that it was not the only local stakeholder group with a view on what the South Bank's future development should entail. Residents' organisations, most notably the WCDG, a well-established planning advisory group that played a central role in the Coin Street campaigns, has a vision of the South Bank's future that differs markedly from SBEG's. Articulated around the former Labour government's *Sustainable Communities* (SCs) agenda, it centres on a call for more affordable housing and improved residential facilities. Much like the Coin Street campaign, in which many of its members played a key role, WCDG's local regeneration agenda is also explicitly anti-tall buildings, a sentiment that sits in opposition to regional planning and economic development strategy which, under the former London Mayor Ken Livingstone, was broadly *pro*-tall building (see Mayor of London, 2004).

Upon joining the WCDG, a process that requires members to identify themselves as a permanent resident of the Waterloo area, individuals are required to agree to the group's aims and policies (see figure 6.2). The WCDG's agenda, while reflective of many of SBEG's own priorities, is, in its emphasis on increased housing provision and a balance of land-uses, closely aligned with New Labour's notion of *sustainable community building*. As a member commented in interview, the publishing of the SCs Plan in 2003 was welcomed by the group,

> "this [was] fabulous [news] to me, this was the high point of [John] Prescott [former Deputy Prime Minister] getting it right, because this is absolutely what, what we believe, it's what I believe and it's what the WCDG believes, that…you know, buildings are for people and spaces are for people and they're only defined in terms of people, man is the measure".

Figure 6.2. WCDG's policies

The POLICIES of WCDG are for:

1. retaining a viable and permanent residential community
2. redressing the imbalance of land uses (too little useful open space and permanent households, etc, and too much dense development, commercialization, advertising, etc)
3. increasing the amount of permanent housing, especially for young families
4. increasing and improving the amount of useful, green public open space
5. retaining and increasing useful retail shopping (that which supports family life)
6. the viability of Lower Marsh shopping centre and the market stalls
7. retaining and improving the library service in Waterloo
8. a better environment; safer, greener, cleaner etc
9. better indoor and outdoor facilities for the local children and young people
10. better facilities to support community activities (free meeting places etc)
11. an increase in safety and reduction in crime
12. controlling traffic pollution and reducing through traffic
13. reducing non-resident parking
14. relocating the bus garage (because of pollution and danger)
15. a ban on coaches waiting or parking
16. no land being used for off street parking at ground level
17. safe and convenient ground level crossings for pedestrians
18. good planning policies to achieve the above
19. consistent implementation of these policies
20. effective and thorough consultation with the residential community

Source: Scan of WCDG original membership document

While there are close links between WCDG's local development vision and the SCs Plan, it is SBEG and its partners, and not the WCDG, who have what Healey (2002: 1779) terms, the 'strategic capacity to imagine the city'. One reason for this is, as Baeten (2000) notes, are the complexities and costs involved in preparing funding bids which, he argues, 'simply exclude urban groups which do not have access to resources, skills or partnerships needed to submit a proposal'. Invoking the language of Peck and Tickell (1995) who have spoken of the 'regeneration game', a SBEG member described how its staff had become expert at exploiting funding opportunities from a range of sources, something identified as key to SBEG's own sustainability,

> "SBEG got used to this game of putting together cocktails of funds and the nature of what was being funded began to change, the issue of [SBEG's] sustainability then becomes one [of knowing] where...opportunities exist".

Opportunities certainly arose as a result of the group's membership. As a SBEG member commented, having the Director of Shell and Chairman of Guy's and St Thomas's Hospital opens doors,

> "you get the dinners and the various bits after formal meetings and they're a great place to be able to talk fairly freely to people, and you get some very good contributors that come along...be it the...political people that are running Lambeth, the chief exec, or the people from Southwark, of course you've got contact with the local MPs".

For another, these, informal, networking events, in addition to providing a forum for members' concerns to be aired, also present an opportunity to gain the 'inside track' on planning and development issues,

> "we had one of the mayor's special advisors came to a dinner that was hosted at St. Thomas', and [he] did a Q&A...of course all the members could pitch in with their special pleading issues and they cornered this guy...so it was very helpful in that sense. I mean, obviously you can't hold someone to what they might have said at a dinner party, but it is very helpful to have some inside track around that planning".

Business actors' ability to influence politics from 'behind the scenes' was a focus for authors of the community power literatures of the 1950s 60s and 70s, and researchers continue to cast a critical eye over what are supposedly 'transparent' policy-making processes (see Thornley et al, 2005). As chapter 2 has suggested, characterisations of a coherent, all-powerful and elite business interest, evident in some of the urban politics literature, may overstate the extent of business influence over local development politics. Yet, SBEG's access to resources, such as its members' riverside conferencing suites for networking events, gives the group an advantage over other, less well-resourced and lower-profile, stakeholder groups. As this diary extract, derived from the observation of a SBEG board meeting suggests, the group's access to high-quality corporate facilities raises their hand,

> [The meeting] has an air of corporate slickness to it, certainly when compared to other community meetings I have attended. There is a SBEG member of staff (a young female) to meet and greet each Board member and who then shows them to the meeting room. Called 'The Deck', this is a fabulous riverside terrace room with shifting coloured lighting provided by a rig overhead that emphasises the views over the city. There is someone serving tea and coffee, and pastries arrive during the meeting. It strikes me that SBEG are very good at organising meetings and run a professional, business-like operation in this regard.

Access to facilities such as 'the Deck' is important, since, as Rose and Miller (1992: 183) suggest, 'a powerful actor, agent or institution is one that, in the particular circumstances obtaining at a given moment, is able to successfully enrol and mobilise persons, procedures and artifacts in pursuit of its goals'. While, as chapter 7 discusses, the extent to which SBEG

can be considered a 'powerful' organisation is open to question, the group has been successful at bringing its agenda to the attention of key people. Appearances by high-profile speakers such as Steven Norris, the former Conservative party mayoral candidate, are a regular feature of SBEG's board meetings, and provide an opportunity for members to discuss matters directly with influential political figures. As Cook (2009) notes, the desire to access what he terms the 'inner circle', and play an active part in decision-making, is a core motivation underpinning business actors' engagement in models such as BIDs and TCM partnerships, and was cited by SBEG members as a core benefit of membership (see chapter 5).

Building good working relationships with the area's long-standing and highly regarded MPs, Kate Hoey and Simon Hughes, has also helped to raise SBEG's profile. As a member commented, "I think SBEG has got a good name, they've got a lot of contacts". A local resident reflected, in interview, that the close links between the local councillors, MPs and SBEG were important in ensuring that residents' viewpoints were fed into the group's activities. As he explained, "we're isolated from SBEG, its Kate [Hoey] that makes them listen to us. We're quite lucky, we have three good councillors and good MPs". As SBEG has become an established presence within these local political networks, it has also become embedded into sub-regional structures such as the Cross River Partnership, whose interests span beyond the immediate South Bank area and include the now-defunct Cross River Tram system.

This is a significant development, as regional-level recognition enabled SBEG to identify itself as not only as an expert in the workings of the South Bank, but as a body with a stake and expertise in, wider issues such as cross-Borough partnership working and regional economic growth strategy. In so doing, SBEG engaged in what Rose and Miller (1992: 184) refer to as a 'process of translation', whereby 'particular and local issues' become, 'tied to much larger ones'. This is evidenced by SBEG's contention that the improvement of the South Bank's public realm is not only of benefit to local stakeholders, but of critical importance to the wider (economic) growth agenda. As a SBEG (2007b: 4) publication states,

> Tourism has been a significant generator of jobs and local spend. Further growth depends on increased dwell time and this, in turn, requires better managed and maintained public realm. The growth necessary for continued regeneration is currently on hold.

Seen through this lens, sustained investment in local regeneration projects and services such as the South Bank Security Patrol, are, as chapter 5 has indicated, not only important in the securing of a clean, safe and well-managed neighbourhood, but are critical to the 'increase of value', both in the locality, neighbouring areas and beyond (see Mitchell and Staeheli, 2006). This argument is extrapolated further by SBEG and, in the same publication, the claim is that, 'growth is the most effective way to access and create jobs for local people, thereby addressing the major issue of worklessness' (SBEG, 2007b: 4).

This assertion has been developed as part of the group's involvement in the writing of Lambeth First's (2008) *Sustainable Community Strategy* (SCS), which focuses upon the alleviation of worklessness. Used to describe 'people who are out of work but who want a job', worklessness was, according to a Lambeth First report, identified 'by residents and partners as a key issue causing a number of social and economic problems across Lambeth' (Lambeth First, 2008: 140). SBEG's involvement in services such as the Waterloo Job Shop, a centre that matches local unemployed people to job vacancies, many of which are at SBEG's member organisations, was readily identified by members as contributing directly to the SCs agenda.

As one member commented, "[SBEG's been] managing the Job Shop to make sure that local people get opportunities for employment, opportunities for development". However, while local unemployment was seen as something that the group could and should be seeking to address, other elements of the SCs agenda were less well understood, and "jargon" was used by several interviewees to describe the concept of Sustainable Community Building (SCB). Others felt their understanding of the term was "woolly" while another interviewee suggested, "I don't think we can necessarily claim any great role in building a sustainable community". However, while many interviewees were unfamiliar with the terminology of SCB, there was some evidence of a common understanding of sustainability that revolved around organisations' being seen, as one interviewee commented, as "identifiable and participating in the community".

Becoming a recognisable local stakeholder, for SBEG, also entailed adopting a more formalised role in bodies such as Lambeth First, a process that represents the second strand of the group's institutionalisation. Described by Baeten (2000: 298) as a process of 'up-scaling', this sees local movements or bodies seek associations with 'governance bodies

which are at the heart of London's power geometry'. As diary notes made during a SBEG board meeting demonstrate, this entailed staff being aware of governmental agendas and (re)orientating the group's activities accordingly,

> Discussions turn towards the group's recent work in placing local people into employment via the Waterloo Job Shop. [A SBEG member] asks whether there is any data available on how many of these people stay in jobs after having been placed with an employer? [A SBEG staff member] responds that the data will be available in March and that, 'if you can show you are good at it, money will flow'. [The SBEG member] says that 'we're very pleased that we are getting people into work, but the challenge now is to sustain that in the longer term'. [SBEG's CEO] intervenes with what seems to be a more strategic and/or business focussed view of this area of the group's work and comments that this is a 'profitable area for us' and is 'supporting other working relations with Lambeth', particularly around the Sustainable Communities agenda. This is one of the first mentions of the SCs agenda that I have come across and the borough's focus on the issue of worklessness in the LSP's Sustainable Communities Strategy is seen as 'good news' for SBEG as it means 'they will take other aspects of our work seriously, it's good politically for us'.

Hailed as the 'partnership of partnerships', LSPs are designed to provide a platform for community, voluntary and business sector representatives, working in partnerships with politicians and local authority officers, to establish neighbourhood renewal priorities (Geddes et al, 2007, see also Taylor, 2006, chapter 2). However, despite New Labour's ambitions that LSP's would encourage 'co-governance' in policy areas such as regeneration, Johnson and Osbourne (2003) suggest that they remain subject to strong, central government, control. As much was admitted by a representative of CLG who commented in interview,

> "I think there's an extent to which central government, by having rather strict, tight controls over some of its agencies, makes operating an LSP quite difficult and you need a sort of quite empowered and…lively local authority to kind of work around that and a lot of engaged people locally"

Despite being designed to foster community involvement in matters such as regeneration, some have questioned how effective LSPs have been at engaging local people, and, in the words of Taylor (2006: 276), community representation on LSPs appears to be less pronounced than business and/or state interests (see also chapter 7).

In the case of this research it was observed that SBEG, as the only business-led group present on the majority of Lambeth First's boards, was closely engaged in the operations of the LSP. SBEG's CEO is a member of Lambeth First's Executive Board, giving the group a say over the strategic direction and governance of the LSP. This was not a role that appeared to be extended to South Bank community groups. As a representative of a South Bank

resident's group described in interview, after initially being welcomed onto the LSP, the decision was handed down by central government to streamline community representation as a way to speed up delivery, effectively foreclosing his organisation's involvement in Lambeth First,

> "the LSP in 2006...partly under government stricture, they kicked out all the community...it was dreadful, I was very involved with the LSP and it was a very exciting, bottom up approach we took in Waterloo...many LSPs in the country were damned by the government...because they weren't [felt to be] moving fast [enough] and delivering anything, they were talking shops, because they were full of all these community issues...The government, as far as I understand...was critical of that, [it] wanted more delivery and [was] tying [LSPs] more to achieving on their CPAs [Comprehensive Area Agreement] and...achieving targets for the various key stakeholders, the key partners, key delivery agents".

New Labour's target-driven approach to urban regeneration, and its desire to maintain centralised control of bodies such as LSPs, was criticised by many who argued that this ran contrary to its stated commitment to the principles of localism (see Morgan, 2007, Pike and Tomaney, 2009). SBEG, however, maintains its presence on Lambeth First. As the previous chapter has shown, the group's reflexive identity, which sees it able to mediate between multiple organisational identities, has been key in initiating, and then *enabling* SBEG to sustain important relationships with governance bodies and key individuals.

For example, SBEG's status as a delivery-focussed, 'on-the-ground', body has been critical in ensuring its ongoing involvement within the LSP, where it is considered an authority on the inner-workings and complexities of the South Bank locality. As a local authority representative commented, "[SBEG is] able to talk with quite a lot of authority about, why, 'yeah you as a council might have that policy, but on the ground it's not working because X, Y, Z, and I know because we're delivering it'". The group's status as a representative of 'major employers' adds legitimacy to its continued involvement in the LSP, and, as a Lambeth First publication points out, 61,500 jobs, almost half of Lambeth's total, are based in north Lambeth, with SBEG's member organisations employing around 50,000 of these (Lambeth Borough of Lambeth, 2007; Personal communication). Others felt that SBEG's hybridised identity meant that it was well-placed to translate different interests across private and public sectors, but also *within* the local business community itself. As a local authority representative commented,

> "SBEG is what I call quasi-public sector or quasi-private sector, it's neither one nor the other, ...which is actually a very good thing, because it gives them the ability to talk, the thing I was talking about, translation...[SBEG] can bring credibility to the

> table [and] say, 'yeah I know about big business, Shell's on my board'. And therefore [it] is able to actually not be in a sense brow-beaten by small businesses saying, 'you don't understand [us]', because [SBEG] can say, 'yeah I do actually'...so that gives [SBEG] the ability to face both ways, which I think is a strength".

For SBEG, participating in institutions such as the LSP provides a valuable platform for group to influence and shape policy such as Lambeth's *Sustainable Community Strategy* (SCS), a document that was authored by Lambeth First members. As a SBEG staff member explained,

> "I had a lot of influence on the style, the emphasis of Lambeth's SCS. I mean it's likely [this was] by default, I was just sort of corralled into chairing the group...I suppose was piping up at every meeting about jobs and growth, which began to sink in. So I think I did influence it quite a lot".

Governance bodies such as LSPs have provided a forum for SBEG to get what a staff member described as its "message about jobs and growth", across to local authority officers and other LSP members, even if, as the above quote indicates, this was not necessarily a pre-meditated aim. In addition to providing a platform for SBEG to communicate its own agenda, participating in LSP activities has also enabled the group to build a more constructive and positive working relationship with local authority actors. As already suggested, effective inter-relations between the business and local government sectors have not always been evident (see chapters 5 and 7).

Indeed, even now, SBEG is not involved in Southwark Council's LSP, a bone of contention for the group who expressed frequent frustration at the Borough's continued indifference to its activities. As a staff member asked in interview, "why won't they speak to us?" Perhaps because of the group's lack of progress in building a relationship with Southwark, the considerable time SBEG's staff members spent on Lambeth First activities was seen as a worthwhile investment in establishing a more constructive way of working with the Council. This, it is hoped, will eventually pay dividends for SBEG, through, for example, the granting of devolved service operation responsibilities to the group. Although as a SBEG staff member reflected in interview this 'pay-off' was by no means guaranteed,

> "A year and a half ago I was spending much too much time on it [the LSP], in the hope that the neighbourhoods' agenda would actually get us the devolved management that we were all after, and in the hope that the political clout of the LSP would influence how the whole council worked, in terms of taking this area seriously. So I invested huge amounts of time in it, which may yet pay off, I guess".

In addition, and as a local authority representative acknowledged, while SBEG have engaged in state-led partnership apparatus such as LSPs, they have also initiated their own governance structures through which to enhance their position in local politics. As she commented, "that's how SBEG tend to get involved, through the governance structures, which are either set up by us, or them depending on what the project is". As chapter 5 has indicated, SBEG has long been aware of the benefits of a partnership approach to regeneration as a way to maximise political and economic support for its agenda.

Carving out a role in partnership governance has also been a way for SBEG to address what Justice and Skelcher (2009) call the 'democratic design problems' facing non-elected 'third-party governance institutions' such as business-led regeneration groups. Demonstrating its own 'democratic credentials' has been an important part of SBEG's institutionalisation, and in the accruing of the *active trust* that Gidden's (1994) argues is necessary in order to interact with others in a society made up of *reflexive individuals*. Instructive here is Justice and Skelcher's (2009) tripartite scale of *governance archetypes*. This outlines the main characteristics of governance structures adopted by bodies such as BIDs in order to ensure their actions are seen as *legitimate*, demonstrate the *consent* of affected parties such as local communities, and are deemed *accountable* to other local stakeholders. Table 6.1 illustrates how SBEG's governance structure combines elements of all three of these archetypes and highlights the mechanisms the group uses to demonstrate its actions are accountable.

Table 6.1. SBEG's governance structure

Governance archetype	Legitimacy	Sources/expressions of authority consent	Accountability
Club	Gained through membership (subscription)	Agreement from members on group aims and activities	To members, related to perceived 'values' of membership
Agency	Mandate from external government actors (via SBP)	Managed by nominated board, and via SBP	Sustained political support from external political actors (via SBP)
Polity	Semi-public political process (via Forum)	Attendance at Forum/community newsletter/public consultations	Continued dialogue with community (via Forum)

Source: Adapted from Justice and Skelcher (2009: 743)

The complexity of SBEG's governance structure has increased over the years. Initially, the group operated in the manner of a private members' 'club' with matters of operational *legitimacy* addressed internally. The legitimacy of members' local interests is, in this 'club' archetype, negotiated by paying the annual subscription fee, and through an informal 'screening process' of new members (see chapter 5). *Consent* is derived solely through mutual agreement amongst members, while SBEG's *accountability* is purely to its members and is assessed by the delivery of agreed benefits to members.

Elements of this 'club' governance archetype persist, but, as SBEG has become a formalised, non-profit body (see 5.3), its governance framework has evolved to include elements of the 'agency' archetype (Justice and Skelcher, 2009). Here, legitimacy continues to be awarded through internal processes, but is also generated by mandates from external government actors, namely local MPs and councillors, who form part of the SBEG-managed partnership, the SBP. This was described, by SBEG members, as the group's "governance wing" and provides it with what a staff member called a "democratic mandate" to act in the area's interests. In this 'agency' archetype, authority to act on local issues is awarded internally through SBEG's nominated Board while institutional accountability is mediated by the SBP and, more specifically, the political support it confers upon the SBEG agenda (see 6.4).

Latterly, in an attempt to smooth past tensions between local residents and businesses that were perceived to be slowing the delivery of local regeneration, the group has adopted elements of the 'polity' governance archetype, in which positive community relations are seen as a determinant of the group's democratic credentials. The *South Bank Forum*, administered by SBEG and which provides an opportunity for local residents and select community groups to discuss local development issues, has been used, by SBEG, to legitimise its activities. For example, collective civic consent to act on behalf of the local community can be measured by attendance at the community Forums, whereas expressions of the group's authority in local issues is made via community newsletters and public consultations which are used to inform residents of SBEG's activities. These activities are also used to demonstrate the group's accountability to the local community and also as a conscious attempt to build what Giddens' (1998) calls a 'pure relationship' based not on the 'blindness of tradition-bound fundamentalism' but instead on trust, openness, responsibility and dialogue (see Loyal, 2003: 154).

6.4. The post-politics of partnership

SBEG's primary means in establishing this 'pure relationship' is the South Bank Partnership or SBP. Described by a SBEG staff member as the group's "political wing", the SBP was formed in 1994, the same year that SBEG became a fully incorporated 'non-profit' body. The partnership brings together SBEG members, the two local MPs, ward councillors, Lambeth and Southwark Council representatives, and personnel from the London Development Agency and the Metropolitan Police, with the aim of 'promoting effective neighbourhood working across borough boundaries and political alignments' (SBP, 2007: no page). The SBP's membership meets quarterly at the offices of member organisations to discuss issues such as cycling strategy, and safety, crime and policing. Meetings are jointly chaired by Kate Hoey MP and Simon Hughes MP, who were singled out for praise by many interviewees for their commitment to the area and ability to bring the South Bank's needs to regional and national government attention. As one interviewee commented, "Kate's incredible, yeah. I mean her influence is huge".

The boundaries between where SBEG ends and the SBP begins are, at best, unclear and, for some, non-existent. As a local community representative commented,

> "[The SBP is a] non-existent fantasy group. I have never seen a terms of reference or set of minutes of who the South Bank Partnership is...We know nothing about them. I've asked many times, asked to be, just to be told those things, let alone be invited to their meetings or to just go and observe or whatever...I can't see who they are or what they are, I don't even know what they do or…I see the levers, which is SBEG".

The relationship between the two bodies is clarified, by SBEG, as one revolving around the concept of delivery. As a statement in a SBEG (2007: 1) publication demonstrates,

> …South Bank Employers' Group is the delivery agent for [the SBP's] programmes. The Partnership is now intended to become the body providing democratic oversight of a future neighbourhood management structure for the area with significant business input and leadership.

The creation of governance partnerships, such as the SBP, has been a feature in the formation of collaborative, local working relations, and also in the securing of shared agendas. As the above quote suggests, this has been a key part of SBEG's institutional legitimisation process. However, the SBP's operations are not public. Instead, individuals are invited, by SBEG, to join the group and therefore to participate in discussions. In this sense, the partnership's agenda is selective in much the same way as SBEG's (see chapter 5). Resident groups are instead invited to participate via the quarterly South Bank Forum. Operated by the SBP, which itself is administered by SBEG, the Forum exists to bring issues to the attention of local people and to allow residents to air their views on forthcoming developments. However, some have questioned the value of the Forum, as a community representative commented, "the] South Bank Forum…it's a space where people listen, they don't sort of do, it's a consultation point, it's not an advocacy point" (see also chapter 7). This is an important distinction, and speaks to some of the concerns of Laclau and Mouffe (2001: 173) who warm of the limiting of political participation to an 'ever narrower area'.

Perhaps the partnership's most notable activity to date has been the publication of *Under Pressure and on the Edge - London's South Bank: A Manifesto for Action* (SBP, 2006). The manifesto is an ambitious document that seeks to secure the long-term future of the area by harnessing 'the pressures of change to the benefit of the people, businesses and activities of the South Bank and of the wider community of which we are on the edge' (SBP, 2006: 3). The manifesto evidences a populist mentality, and, as the above quote illustrates, invokes the concept of 'the people' in emphasising the mutual gains that will flow from neighbourhood regeneration (see chapter 1).

Produced, strategically, by SBEG members and staff, who act as the SBP's secretariat, to coincide with the local authority elections held in 2006, the manifesto is designed to bring the South Bank's 'needs' to the attention of a wider political audience, and to stimulate inward investment into the area. After sustained efforts on behalf of SBEG staff, the manifesto received attention from local, regional and even central government, eventually becoming adopted by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) as a 'best-practice model' in the development of Local Charters. Described as a voluntary partnership agreement between a community, the local authority and other service providers, and which sets out local development priorities, Local Charter's closely resemble the SBP's Manifesto and formed part of the former government's 'neighbourhood agenda' (see DCLG, 2008b, chapter 2).

The SBP's 'can-do' approach to community development also received praise from regional government actors. In a press release to mark the publication of the manifesto, Jim Fitzpatrick, Minister for London commented, 'South Bank Partnership represents real neighbourhood leadership and delivery in action. I praise their proactive and comprehensive partnership approach and believe that many areas in the capital could benefit from adopting their self-help attitude' (SBP, 2007). As Raco (2003b: 241) identifies, the former Labour government strongly promoted the concept of the self-motivated, active and responsible community, and sought to reward bodies such as the SBP, 'seen to be positive in their attitudes towards development projects', while those who were more critical often saw their views sidelined (see also Baeten 2009).

The SBP manifesto, which calls for a 'balanced' approach to development and acknowledges the 'inevitable tensions' between business and residential communities, continues to be underpinned by the belief, as espoused by SBEG, that the economic growth opportunities offered by the area's growing reputation as a 'cultural centre' will bring benefits to the wider South Bank community. As the foreword (2006: 3) states,

> ..if we fail to find mechanisms to fund proper management and maintenance of the public realm, the area will lose its attraction to tourists and businesses...If we are creative and work together, and make use of the networks and partnerships which now exist, we will be able to harness the pressures of change to the benefit of the people, businesses and activities of the South Bank and of the wider community of which we are on the edge.

The core of the manifesto (SBP, 2006) is the 'action plan', which identifies five 'fundamental objectives' and which closely mirror SBEG's operational aims (see chapter 6):

- Economic growth, new developments and new jobs
- Improved schools and training, especially to benefit local people without work
- A safe, clean and accessible environment for all
- An efficient transport interchange and improved gateway to London
- Increased opportunities for culture, sport, recreation and shopping

For Rose and Miller (1992: 184), the production of such documents is part of a process which renders a particular sphere, such as the South Bank's economy, governable. As they suggest, '[w]riting codifies customs and habits, normalising them, both transforming them into repeatable instructions as to how to conduct oneself, and establishing authoritative means of judgement' (Rose and Miller, 1992: 184). These claims appear to be corroborated by an interview exchange with a SBEG staff member, in which he suggests the manifesto became, by committing goals to paper, the 'guiding principle' for the borough,

> "I mean this [the manifesto] was a big breakthrough...because it was well written, [it] fed into some Lambeth consciousness, so they began to quote it in policy documents, and it got to the point where it was being referred to in policy documents as 'the guiding principle' for the borough, or at least the business end of the borough, without people even having read it...the fact that it went forward with us able to say in all honesty it had the support of the then mayor and the leaderships, both the councils and the MPs and all the councillors and the businesses...we got the right balance between growth and business on the one hand and the interests of the residential community...on the other.
>
> Q: So was it an attempt to try and produce a shared agenda for the area?
>
> A: Yeah. Absolutely. That's what it is, yeah."

Bringing these 'shared agendas' into a singular policy document is one of a range of techniques that are constitutive of wider power relations in urban governance. As Rose and Miller (1992: 184) argue, it is '[w]hen each can translate the values of others into its own terms, such that they provide norms and standards for their own ambitions, judgments and conduct, a network has been composed that enables rule 'at a distance''. The ability to govern at a distance, that is, the identification and management of a 'domain outside of 'politics'', is, Rose and Miller (1992: 180) argue, a key feature of contemporary, liberal government, and is dependent upon the forging of 'alliances' between authorities and citizens (see also chapter 3).

As section 6.2 has shown, regeneration in the South Bank is today overseen by an extensive network of multi-sector partnerships (see also Baeten, 2000, 2009, Brindley, 2000). For Baeten (2009: 238, 246), these partnerships have deliberately and consciously sought out alliances between the 'local and global interests' in the South Bank, giving rise to what describes as, 'authoritarian technocratic conglomerates of professionals and politicians'. Echoing Rose and Miller's (1992) work, Baeten (2009) claims bodies such as these, by dint of their cross-party, partnership status, are perceived to be politically neutral and thus able to 'pursue regeneration-beyond-the-state'. A central reason for this, Baeten (2009: 249) argues, is the deliberate orienting of regeneration policies towards the 'local community', the result of which is that 'people's demands are neutralized, 'post-politicized', and reduced to 'the overall demand (complaint) of a particular group to just this demand with its particular' (Zizek, 1999: 204). Interviews evidenced that the partnerships between local stakeholders were part of a process whereby local issues were seen to revolve around what one SBEG member referred to as the "political with small p", that is, strategic partnerships between local stakeholders were seen to be easy to achieve and in the words of one local authority representative, outside of the domain of what might be termed 'politics proper' (see chapter 1),

> "getting consensus amongst partners...has not really been a problem...So, if we're not talking about politics, consensus is not that difficult a thing to do, it's about working together and you know, involving at the beginning the process and having shared aims and objectives and things."

However, at the level of local government, identified as a 'political' sphere and which has, in the Lambeth case, historically been characterised by party political tensions and frequent changes in administration, the development of consensus was felt to be much more difficult. As a local government representative remarked, "Politically, I'm under no illusions, it's impossible in this place...I used to work at Westminster, it's much easier there." The danger of such views is that the inherently conflictual nature of local needs, interests and relationships are denied, a process which facilitates the insertion of a consensual or 'post-political' notion of place, a process that is examined further in chapter 7 (see also Baeten, 2009, Mouffe, 2000, 2005).

As chapters 1 and 2 have shown, Baeten's (2009) arguments relate to a larger body of work concerned with the annihilation of what Rancière (2001: 18) terms 'politics proper' from contemporary governance, which, he argues, can only exist as a 'deviation from this normal order of things'. For scholars such as Swyngedouw (2007b: no page), the emergence of

partnership working within contemporary urban regeneration is indicative of the emergence of a post-political condition wherein,

> …urban regeneration is increasingly framed in a common and consensual language of competitive creativity, flexibility, efficiency, state entrepreneurship, strategic partnerships, and collaborative advantage.

For Elwood (2004: 756), the promotion of collaborative modes of urban governance has seen citizen participation channelled into 'particular acceptable forums, limiting citizen voice to particular arenas, removing a basis for resistance to state agendas' see also (Haughton and Allmendiger, 2009, Raco, 2003). Such comments resonate closely with Baeten's (2009: 246) reading of the South Bank case in which he argues,

> Regeneration efforts, exclusively conducted through the institutionalised channels of partnerships and governmental grants, create a singular discourse about what regeneration should be about, and reduce any alternative regeneration view, expressed by whomever whenever, to sheer background noise.

It is the foreclosure of alternative possibilities for the South Bank's future that is, for Baeten (2009), most concerning, and elevates matters of local regeneration to an issue of relevance for the study of democracy more widely. Thus, for Laclau (1990), the possibility of a genuine politics is dependent upon the openness of the future. However, for others, such as Dikeç (2007: 147), political activity may in fact be stimulated by oppression, resulting in 'an attempt to open up political spaces in a context where the space of the political seems well delimited' (see also, Laclau and Mouffe, 2001, Mouffe, 2000, 2005). It is the foreclosure of even this *possibility*, through, for example, the silencing of oppositional viewpoints, that is, for scholars of the post-political, indicative of the end of democracy.

In the South Bank case, there is evidence to suggest that partnership working has been seen, particularly by delivery-focussed bodies such as SBEG, as a way to overcome past conflicts surrounding development. These conflicts, as a community representative explained, were felt to be stalling the delivery of regeneration in the area,

> "The rationale was that Waterloo had been wrecked by [an] endless lack of partnership working, because we'd all fought each other to a standstill...And there's an element of truth in that...[The thinking was] we all needed to stop beating each other up and work together as much as we could, instead of emphasising our differences, emphasise our connections and similarities and all that sort of thing".

However, while this interviewee acknowledged that there were benefits to be gained from working together, he also expressed concern that, in 'emphasising connections', points of disagreement could be sidelined,

> " I...can understand the value and power of it [partnership working], I could also see that [there] was the potential for it [to act] as a de-fanging device, as a way of stopping, by not emphasising our differences, you were then actually not allowed to mention your differences, your differences were then made to disappear".

This interviewee's characterisation of partnership working as a 'de-fanging device' invokes Mouffe's (2005: 1) highly critical description of the 'common sense' view that she argues now dominates many Western democratic societies and in which holds that a 'world without enemies is now possible'.

Mouffe's (2005) concerns about the limited opportunities for the expression of difference and disagreement in contemporary politics resonate with Flyvbjerg's (1998) writings on the interchanges between rationality and power within urban development. Here, Flyvbjerg (1998: 194) suggests, adopting a collaborative approach offers a way to control what he terms, '[a]ntagonistic confrontations'. According to Flyvbjerg (1998), conflicts are largely outside the domain of rationality, given that they are 'dominated by the rationality of power'. Therefore, if the aim is to 'maintain rational discourse, it is...crucial that power relations be controlled' (Flyvbjerg, 1998: 194).

As this, and previous chapters have suggested, the deployment of rational argument has been a key feature of the regeneration of the South Bank. This process has seen SBEG and its partners use a place-based development vision to try and gain control over the direction of development debates (see chapter 7). The bypassing of long-standing conflicts between businesses and residents is a part of this process, something that was acknowledged by a SBEG staff member who reflected on the rationale underpinning the formation of the SBP,

> "The partnership is what brings together the businesses and the elected representatives. It was [formed] partly...[as] a response to the fact that there were very powerful Waterloo community organisations, which are not now nearly so powerful or militant, and [it was] the only way to by-pass them and to get some buy-in for what the businesses wanted, because you were talking about people who would not set foot in our offices because we were the devil incarnate, you know, we were 'capitalists'...there was that nonsense."

Positioned as unrepresentative of the views of the (rational) majority, this group's views were then bypassed. As a staff member commented,

> "To get some sort of buy-in you had to by-pass all those community activist organisations and say these MPs and ward councillors are elected by quite a substantial number of local residents so they have a mandate and 'we'll listen to what they have to say rather than what you have to say'".

This quote closely resonates with claims made by Mouffe (2005: 48) who takes issue with the *reflexive modernity thesis* and in particular its contention that the 'adversarial model of politics, characteristic of simple modernity, has...become obsolete [and] needs to be discarded'. Mouffe (2005: 55) suggests that, in invoking 'modernization', the concept becomes a 'powerful rhetorical gesture', 'whose effect is to discriminate between those who are in tune with the new conditions of the modern, post-traditional world and those who still cling desperately to the past'. Positioning those community activists who resisted working collaboratively with business as either 'militant', hopelessly outdated, or both, serves to place them outside of partnership mechanisms and allows their views to be sidelined, while the insertion of elected officials in their place enables the group to demonstrate its own democratic credentials.

6.5. Towards a consensual politics of place

While the previous section indicates that the development of the South Bank bears some of the hallmarks of what Baeten (2009: 237, 246) calls, 'post-political regeneration tactics', including the creation of partnership governance structures, and the positioning those with 'alternative' views of the area's future development as 'traditionalists', Baeten's (2009) assertion that this has 'created a singular discourse about what regeneration should be about' remains equivocal. This section considers Baeten's (2009) claims in more detail, drawing upon interview data and an examination of recent policy and planning frameworks to assesses whether there is evidence of an emergent, consensual, politics of place. As chapter 5 has shown, SBEG's activities are informed by a clear, but (inevitably) partial, view of what local place-shaping could or indeed, *should*, entail. This section asks whether this reading of place, as Baeten suggests, has become the accepted or predominant view of the South Bank's future(s).

While the relationship between SBEG and the South Bank's two local authorities remains far from unproblematic (see chapter 7), by the early 2000s, after close to 10 years of lobbying, the publication of several of its own policy documents, and the delivery of a number of regeneration projects and services, SBEG appeared to be enjoying some success in communicating, to local government, that public realm improvements should be the focus of regeneration strategy in the South Bank. Local-area policy and planning documents, as this extract from the (2007: 194) *Unitary Development Plan* attests, have begun to portray the South Bank in language reminiscent to SBEG's, in particular,

highlighting the 'run-down' nature of the public realm, a concern that, as chapter 5 has shown, remains a focus for SBEG members,

> [A plan for the South Bank and Waterloo]...will need to ensure that the overall scale, design and layout of these proposals form a coherent urban design, creating an area of world class quality- an 'Office Boulevard' – like Potsdamer Platz in the new Berlin - which similarly could be a setting for world class new architecture...The current disconnected, oppressive and run down nature of much of this area is a present disincentive for investment.

Lambeth's apparent embracing of the SBEG agenda is all the more notable given the Borough's attitude towards development in the South Bank during the 1970s and early 1980s, when, in keeping with its radical reputation, the Council supported the local community's calls to reduce the number of office developments in the area, and increase provision of housing and community facilities (see chapter 4). Instead, and as a Borough planning officer commented, key figures in the current Labour administration are supportive of SBEG's agenda, in particular echoing the group's calls for the maximisation of the area's commercial development potential, and supporting SBEG's claims that it is "best placed" to deliver regeneration on behalf of the wider community,

> "perversely, [the Council] have adopted more of a laisse-faire attitude towards Waterloo, just because it can look after itself....It doesn't need the intervention of the authority, and in fact Labour's role in Waterloo has been to support SBEG and to support the ambitions for high density developments. So the value is to maximise the development potential and inward investment [so] that Waterloo can deliver to the rest of the borough".

While the interviewee emphasised that the planning system was also committed to involving what he described as the "very lively local community", he also outlined how the current administration saw some of the more vociferous community groups, as "not necessarily being representative". As a result, he explained, other, more collaboratively-minded community groups, such as the *Waterloo Community Coalition Group* (WaCoCo), have "come to the fore latterly".

As Bevir (2006: 6) identifies, recent years has seen a shift towards a model of governance which 'derives principally from the beliefs that networks are more efficient than hierarchies and that dialogue and consensus can build political legitimacy'. WaCoCo, an umbrella group formed following the disbanding of the Waterloo Community Regeneration Trust (WCRT) at the end of the SRB programme, has come to be seen as a key actor in a newly consensual approach to the regeneration of the South Bank. By explicitly adopting a partnership approach, the group has begun engaging more frequently with established bodies such as

SBEG, as part of a bid to strengthen its role in local strategy-making. As a member of WaCoCo explained,

> "[by] creating and maintaining...better linkages with other major stakeholders [we are]...able to pull our weight and to shout...loudly enough to be heard alongside SBEG and other groups...that's been very important in terms of us working together and working as a partnership and realising there are lots of things that actually we can [share]..it's consensus rather than unanimity...[it] doesn't mean to say that we have to agree over everything...but there are quite clear[ly] things where we share a common interest."

WaCoCo's openness to partnership working appears to have paid dividends, and steps are being taken to grant the group membership of the South Bank Partnership. As a representative explained, "We haven't quite got South Bank Partnership representation yet...in large part it's just a couple of dots and Is and Ts to cross with some of the politics of it". This would make it the only community group to be represented formally on the membership board of the partnership, despite the large number of voluntary groups in the area (see 7.2). As a diary extract reveals, WaCoCo played a formal part in the quarterly South Bank Forum, the SBP's quarterly residents forum, for the first time in March 2009,

> [The Chair] welcomes...WaCoCo. [A member] has told me that this is the first forum that they have been able to attend. I hadn't realised that it was a closed event, and had assumed that everyone was able to come along freely. Isn't that is the point of a community forum I wonder?

Members of the residential community were aware of the selective nature of the SBP membership, and, as a voluntary sector representative explained, of the need to demonstrate a willingness to adopt a more conciliatory way of working,

> "the community sector were seen...as being difficult, not as business-like...You know, the same old faces, people ranting on with their axes to grind....[For] quite a long time representation on South Bank Partnership has been denied on the basis of...'which community group do we invite to be on it, 'cos we can't have you all on it'. And part of the point of WaCoCo is to turn around and quite deliberately to say...'Look, we've put our house in order...it's showing how the community sector can be a positive influence...not something that has to be argued with all the time by the business sector, but actually there are things they need us to do".

As Baeten (2009: 248) argues, one consequence of this, carefully controlled, approach to community engagement, is a dual process of inclusion and exclusion, wherein those seen to be business-friendly and receptive to a growth-orientated agenda are welcomed, while others 'who do not understand how regeneration 'works today' can be safely ignored'. Interviewees spoke of emergent forms of collaborative working between those representing the less adversarial factions of the community, SBEG, the local ward

councillors, and the local authority planning department. Indeed, members of these organisations formed a working group with the aim of developing what a community representative described as a "shared vision" to feed into the *Waterloo Supplementary Planning Document* (SPD) (London Borough of Lambeth, 2009). The SPD, produced by the London Borough of Lambeth, was adopted in June 2009 following substantial revisions. As a community sector representative explained in interview, the rationale underpinning his organisation's involvement in the working group was that, "we wanted to be able to generate and articulate more of a strategic vision for Waterloo, rather than tending to be the bottom of the pile and people who just had to sort of react to everything that was thrown at them".

The desire to adopt a more active, rather than reactive, role in place-shaping resonates with what Staehaeli (2008: 6) refers to as a 'subaltern counter public' in which 'members of a marginalized group came together to participate in a kind of a public sphere, to gain voice, and to hone the skills that would allow them to contribute to broader debate'. It is interesting to note that Lambeth's planning department selected WaCoCo to oversee the SPD community consultation process and not the WCDG, who receive funding from Lambeth to represent residents' views in planning and development issues. That they were overlooked, for one interviewee, reflects the feeling that, "they've become very estranged as an individual body". Instead, WCDG were invited to participate in the SPD consultation process via WaCoCo. This arms-length approach was, as a community representative explained, justified as way to defuse past tensions between different sectors. As a WaCoCo member explained,

> "by being part of us they [WCDG] did a lot of work, they inputted in and they indeed still have some bits where their membership would slightly disagree with what might be the overall view....But nonetheless they're much more sort of inside now and as a result there's much less tension in the relationships across the board."

The management of community consultation in this way has seen certain, less confrontational, elements of the community included in an emergent consensus about local redevelopment, while others, perceived to be more hostile to change, are held at arms' length from the process, at least until they adopt more 'cooperative' ways of working. This process is further evidence of the increasingly 'post-political' nature of regeneration in the South Bank (Baeten, 2009). As Staehaeli (2008: 13) argues, uncovering the 'powers to define community and to exclude on the basis of that definition' is significant since it represents a 'power that fosters particular ethics without appearing to, and certain

imaginations of the public are actualized in ways that shroud the hard realities of inclusion and exclusion with soft, comforting notions of care and community'.

In the South Bank case, the selective and exclusionary definition of 'community' is underpinned by what Mouffe (2005: 11) identifies as a central trait of liberal thought, 'the rationalist belief in the availability of a universal consensus based on reason'. The SBP working group set out to find what was described by one member as "a consensus response between...between all the different sections, particularly around articulating the overall vision". Based on the idea that there are, as one interviewee put it, "three main elements that make up Waterloo; residential population, transport hub, or transport, and the business, creative side", the resulting development vision seeks to "maintain a balance between all those three".

While, as a member of a community group explained, there was recognition that "we're not gonna necessarily always agree on...the more practical, detailed level, there will be more support from maybe the business side for tall buildings...than perhaps there will be from the community side", there was, nonetheless, a firm belief that "a sort of consensus approach to things like this" was beneficial, and, perhaps more fundamentally, *possible*. For Mouffe (2005: 48, 11), the belief that, 'through dialogue, people with very different interests will make decisions about the variety of issues which affect them and develop a relation mutual tolerance', denies the fact that 'every consensus is based on acts of exclusion'.

For those involved in the SPD working group however, a consensus approach was seen as the best way to secure the sustainable future for the South Bank. Invoking the language of *sustainable community building*, a third sector representative explained,

> "[it's] about trying to build a sustainable community. In our case [there are] the three sort of main pillars and [we're] saying, it isn't about any one sector delivering it, the real holy grail is when all the different stakeholders in the community work in some form of relationship to each other in a partnership, which doesn't have to be everyone agrees all the time. But they do see each other as peers and equals and that they have mechanisms for discussing and exploiting consensus when it's there, being able to disagree without killing each other, and also a certain amount of humbleness, of recognising that it can't be driven by any single one sector in the area".

For this interviewee, engaging in the search for a consensus on matters such as regeneration represented the only way to ensure that residents' views were represented alongside other sectors, including the private sector. As Baeten (2009) notes, the adversarial tactics used during the Coin Street campaigns, or what one interviewee referred to as the "old games and the dirty tricks", are no longer relevant in today's post-political development climate. Instead, the only way to exercise a viewpoint is from *within* the consensus. As a community representative explained, this necessitated a move away from the 'old approaches', which he characterised thus, "back in '72 there was a sense in which all we wanted to do was to stop this". Instead, there was a pragmatic acceptance that embracing further commercial development was now the only, realistic, way to deliver wider community benefits,

> "And this is partly why we haven't been completely unwelcoming to a lot of the development, and we're not opposing Elizabeth House [a predominantly office-based redevelopment scheme], for example, because we want to see some large numbers of people moving into the area to work who will then come and use our retail centre [Lower Marsh market] and who will then make sure that we have a retail centre that fits the needs of the local community as well...there is now a very strong recognition that the needs of local residents are served by getting [development], and coexist, to some extent, with the needs of the workers coming to work here, and we can build a bigger pie which we'll all benefit from if we do this."

For Peck and Tickell (1995: 56), such claims are indicative of a wider transformation in the practices of urban politics that has seen a new 'hegemony of political pragmatism, boosterist partnership and accommodation to business partnership [emerge]...synonymous with going for growth'. Others have questioned the search for mutual solutions in planning policy, suggesting that a recent focus on ''win-win-win solutions' may have helped to script out oppositional voices' (Haughton and Allmendinger, 2010a: 803, see also, Haughton and Allmendinger, 2010b).

As chapter 2 has shown, sustaining economic growth has been the unifying goal of urban policies in recent years and has only recently been called into question following the global financial crisis (see chapter 8). It is therefore not surprising that planning frameworks relating to the South Bank are also imbued with the assumption of long-term economic growth. The *London Plan* (2004), which outlined the then Mayor Ken Livingstone's vision for London as an 'an exemplary world city', is premised upon an agenda of continued growth, much of it seen to emanate from the City of London. The Plan (2004:234) identifies the South Bank and Waterloo as one of 28 'Opportunity Areas' suitable for more intensified development and calls for the '[s]ensitive intensification' and a 'balance of uses' in the area,

to reflect 'the entertainment and cultural roles played by areas along the South Bank'. 'Secure and enhanced pedestrian access to the riverside' is flagged as a 'priority' area for action, a vision that was outlined further in the *Waterloo Opportunity Area Planning Framework* (GLA, 2007: vi) which calls for,

> [A] new 'City Square'[21] to create a radically improved public space, to improve permeability to and within the area and provide new development principally in the area around and above Waterloo Station.

It also sets quantifiable targets for local growth, calling for 15,000 new jobs and 500 homes in the area by 2016[22]. As this interview exchange with a SBEG staff member demonstrates, the parallels between the group's agenda and the vision for the area outlined in the *Opportunity Area Framework* were not wholly coincidental,

> "Q: What's your role been in feeding into those sorts of documents? I mean you say it reflects a lot of the things that you're trying to do.
>
> A: Oh, it was substantial. Yeah. We and our members fed substantially into the Waterloo opportunity area planning framework, to the point where the community people said there hadn't been enough consultation and we kept quiet because there'd been a hell of a lot with us".

SBEG's capacity to 'scale up' its agenda, either by 'translating' local issues to a borough, regional or national scale, or by accessing the 'inner circle' of bodies such as the GLA, has been critical in the group's ability to ensure its members' interests are represented in the strategy-making process. In the case of the *Waterloo Opportunity Area Planning Framework*, this was important not only because it ensures that members' views are represented at a regional level, presenting opportunities for the resourcing of SBEG projects, but also because it enables the group to use the Mayor's endorsement of their agenda as a bargaining tool in the shaping of Borough-level planning strategies. As a SBEG staff member explained, this was an approach the group used to ensure their interests were represented in Lambeth's (2007) *Unitary Development Plan* (UDP),

> "The London Plan identifies [the South Bank's] strategic importance as a location for major employment and for [housing]…but [for] the UDP, we went to the inquiry and lobbied long and hard and gave evidence to Lambeth that we didn't feel that this particular location was one where you should be putting housing, because it's of strategic importance for jobs, so it's really a preferred office location".

[21] 'Waterloo City Square' is one of SBEG's active regeneration projects (see chapter 6). It is currently overseeing the design competition process as part of its role as project manager.

[22] These targets are currently under review as part of the revisions to the London Plan overseen by current Mayor, Boris Johnson. The consultation draft replacement plan, published in October 2009 (GLA, 2009), identifies a minimum number of 1900 new homes, and an indicative employment capacity of 15,000.

Lobbying in this way was felt to have ceded results, and as a SBEG member commented, "there's a very good basis, both in the London Plan and in the Waterloo and the Lambeth planning documents for what we're trying to do". As table 6.2 shows, these claims appear to have merit, and analysis of local, borough and regional plans and policy documents evidenced a vision of the South Bank that is highly reminiscent of SBEG's. The UDP (London Borough of Lambeth, 2007: 10) for example, describes the South Bank and Waterloo area as, the 'commercial heart of the borough and the home of large businesses and the most visible element of a thriving, expanding arts and leisure industry in the borough'. This is a message that, as early parts of the chapter show, SBEG staff members have been trying to convey to local authority actors for several years (see also chapter 6).

Table 6.2. Local, borough and regional planning and policy documents 2007-2009

Planning/policy document	Author	Year	Description	Vision for Waterloo/South Bank
Waterloo Opportunity Area Framework (also known as the Waterloo Development Framework)	GLA	2007	Mayoral guidance, supplementary to the London Plan, relating to Waterloo's designation as an Opportunity Area	*To give Waterloo a new 'City Square' to create a radically improved public space, to improve permeability to and within the area and provide new development principally in the area around and above Waterloo Station*
Lambeth Unitary Development Plan	London Borough of Lambeth	2007	Together with the London Plan, forms the development plan for Lambeth	*A World Class Place – The overall scale, design and layout of major proposals in Waterloo should form a coherent urban design, creating an area of world-class quality. The vision for this area is for it to become:* *• A desirable destination for cultural pursuits, business and pleasure;* *• A place of work with particular emphasis on the media and cultural industries;* *• A place with a flourishing, cohesive and inclusive residential community;* *• A place of high-quality, accessible open spaces with riverside walkways and views;* *• A meeting place that is friendly, clean, colourful, safe, dynamic and diverse;* *• A place that has world recognition*
Waterloo Supplementary Planning Document	London Borough of Lambeth	2009	Provides a development framework to ensure a comprehensive approach to the regeneration of Waterloo; applies policies contained within the UDP and London Plan, specifically to Waterloo; Provides a framework within which Lambeth can assess development proposals and secure the highest design quality; coordinate public realm and infrastructure improvements; and enable pooling s.106 contributions on an area-basis	
Lambeth Local Development Framework – Draft Core Strategy	London Borough of Lambeth	2009	The Core Strategy is part of the LDF 'folder' of Development Plan Documents which will replace the UDP in 2011. Sets out the overall vision for the sustainable development of the borough, the objectives to be achieved, the strategic policies required to achieve them and the methods used to deliver and monitor progress	*The Council will support and enhance Waterloo as a key part of Central London and Lambeth and its economy in its various roles as an international centre for culture and arts; a pre-eminent international, domestic and local tourist/leisure and entertainment area; a major location for offices, hotels, healthcare and higher education; a mixed residential area with appropriate supporting community, service and shopping facilities; its valued historic character and its role as being one of London's most important transport hubs*

Source: Author's own

There is evidence to suggest, as indicated by table 6.2, that development and planning in the South Bank is increasingly characterised by a consensual politics of place; a reading of the future of the area that is underpinned by the world city discourse, and is firmly focussed on public realm improvements and the facilitation of cultural, economic and community regeneration through commercial investment. This vision is being developed through what are termed 'collaborative' partnerships, yet, as this research indicates, these are, in fact, closely managed and controlled bodies that operate on the tacit understanding that certain elements of the population should be excluded so as not to impede progress.

However, without the support of the developers and investors, called upon to deliver a 'better South Bank for all' through, for example, Section 106 planning contributions or affordable housing targets, much of this is ephemeral. SBEG is well aware of this, and operates a commercial property group, the South Bank Property Group, whose remit is to coordinate information on planning and development issues among its members, and to offer advice to potential investors on planning and development matters (see also chapter 6). According to several SBEG members, gradually, developers have become convinced that the South Bank is now a viable site for investment. As a SBEG member remarked in interview, the public realm improvements funded by the two rounds of SRB funding demonstrated, through physical changes to the environs, the (commercial) potential of the area,

> "A significant difference has been [that] in 1994...you had to sort of really argue as to why people should invest in the area, [but] by the time we did...the second urban design strategy [in 2002]...people had been convinced".

The effect of this has been, according to one interviewee, to lower the risk for developers and investors, a process that has been premised upon overcoming the popular perception of a 'dysfunctional' local authority planning system,

> "hopefully...we're able to ensure that developers see this as a lower risk area in order to develop, whereas before it was always...you either had a dysfunctional council or you had a mad community, did you need all that aggravation when you could go and develop in the next door borough?"

6.6. Conclusion

As the above quote suggests, in recent years, the South Bank has become a more attractive prospect to investors, who have been implored, by SBEG, to play a part in delivering a 'better South Bank for all'. Policy and planning documents are now largely supportive of this goal, and seek to present a united vision of the area as a commercially and culturally rich 'engine of growth' for the wider Boroughs and London as a whole. While policies continue to invoke the concept of balance, for example, calling for the need to be sensitive towards the needs of existing residents as well as businesses, there is an underlying assumption that regeneration can only be delivered through further growth. While some community groups, such as the WCDG, have tried to resist this, calling instead for a focus on the provision of affordable housing and residential facilities such as libraries, the chapter has shown that they have been held at arms length from planning and policy-making processes, making it easier to discount their views as irrelevant or outdated. As the chapter has shown, community views, in the South Bank, appear to only be acceptable if delivered in a non-conflictual style via other, more collaboratively-minded, bodies.

SBEG has played an instrumental role in the shaping of this consensual politics of place that is closely aligned to its operational rationality and its members' core interests. The group's ability to engage in a range of 'techniques of government', including political lobbying, elite networking and a role in formal governance institutions such as LSPs, has given SBEG a platform through which to deploy the (rational) argument that the South Bank is a place that is suitable for further growth. SBEG's reflexive organisational status has meant it is comparatively well-resourced relative to other stakeholders to navigate the 'complexity of spatial and scalar relations and horizons of action' that characterise contemporary urban governance (Jessop, 2005: 1-2). The South Bank is no exception, and is home to a series of multi-sector bodies, each involved, to varying degrees, in the planning and development of the area. As the chapter has shown, SBEG is particularly adept at scaling up and down its agenda, allowing it to bring its members' interests to the attention of local, borough, regional and national-scale bodies. However, these techniques are not at the disposal of all stakeholders, and, as a result, some organisations, namely SBEG, are more able than others to adapt to these new governance frameworks. This is important since, as Rose and Miller (1992) and Healey (2002) suggest, it is productive of uneven power relations in urban governance and the shaping of places.

SBEG's role in instigating new modes of partnership working has also been a factor in the development of a consensus around local regeneration. As the chapter has shown, while pertaining to operate as collaborative governance mechanisms, in practice, institutions such as the SBP work on the basis of closely managed community engagement that has seen more combative factions of the residential community excluded from place shaping activities. Despite this, these highly localised bodies are purported to be politically benign in nature. For Baeten (2009), this is a worrying development since it is the evacuation of antagonism that paves the way for the insertion of depoliticised, consensual (and yet also exclusionary), development discourses. The chapter has explored how this vision now closely reflects SBEG's own agenda, a rationality that is proving harder for residential groups to resist as the 'increase of value' becomes the predominant goal of urban regeneration (Mitchell and Staehaeli, 2006, see also Peck and Tickell, 1995, Haughton and Allmendinger, 2010a, 2010b).

Having explored the ways in which a consensual politics of place has been created in the South Bank, the next chapter considers how this operates in relation to the delivery of regeneration. As chapter 3 has suggested, much of the literature that deals with the notion of the post-political is characterised by a lack of empirical detail regarding what the localised effects of post-political approaches to governing are. While, as this chapter indicates, SBEG has had some success at convincing developers and policy makers and planners of the potential for further investment in the South Bank, a question mark remains over how a consensual politics of place might be delivered. Has the group been able to convert the tacit support for its agenda into concrete and deliverable regeneration programmes? What do these consist of, and how are they representative of a consensual vision of place? Is there evidence of resistance to, or barriers in, the delivery of this vision?

In addressing these questions, consideration of the power relations in the production of place-politics is necessary. Baeten's (2009) claims regarding the post-political nature of the South Bank's development tend to assume that SBEG, as the core business-interest body in the area, is in control of all aspects of local regeneration, yet, as the research has already indicated, this is questionable. The next chapter critically addresses matters of power and influence in the delivery of regeneration in the South Bank as part of the thesis' aim to explore the grounded and localised effects of a post-political style of governing.

Chapter 7. Questions of power and influence: Delivering regeneration in the South Bank

7.1. Introduction

As the previous chapter has shown, in recent years, a consensual politics of place has emerged in the South Bank which posits that regeneration can only be delivered through further, economic, growth. For Baeten (2009: 238), the creation of a regeneration consensus has been predicated upon the alignment of business and non-corporate interests through partnerships that have 'installed a non-oppositional, post-political, non-democratic regime of regeneration'. Baeten (2009: 246) positions SBEG as a central driver in this process, claiming that, 'the South Bank Employer's Group [is] currently deciding over all important aspects of regeneration'. The chapter considers the validity of this statement, and, in so doing, assesses SBEG and its partners' levels of influence over the delivery of regeneration in the South Bank.

Drawing upon theorisations of power and influence, the chapter considers the inter-institutional relations involved in local place-shaping. As previous chapters have suggested, development in the South Bank is characterised by uneven access to resources, including political networks, which determine stakeholders' relative (in)ability to engage in, and shape, local area policies and plans. While SBEG has deployed a range of *techniques of government* to gather support for its agenda and carve out a more formalised institutional status, the chapter shows that its capacity to deliver regeneration programmes remains conditional on the securing of support from other local stakeholders, including residents and local authority actors. Empirical case examples are used to draw out these contingencies, which, in turn, are shown to shape and define SBEG and its partners' role in delivering regeneration in the South Bank.

The chapter is structured as follows. Section 7.2 briefly outlines some core writings on power and influence that are used, in the remainder of the chapter, to frame a discussion of power relations in delivering regeneration. In 7.3, the case of Doon Street, a controversial development proposal for a 43-storey, mixed-use tower, is introduced. It demonstrates the techniques used by SBEG and its partners to deliver their vision of a 'better South Bank for all', an agenda built upon the belief that, "what's good for us is good for them" (see chapter 5). In particular, the Doon Street case shows how Coin Street

Community Builders, founder members of SBEG, and the developers behind the proposal, have sought to downplay the controversies of the project by recourse to 'rational' argument and, specifically, the construction of shared 'needs' (Flyvbjerg, 1998). However, a small number of residents, along with English Heritage and Westminster Council, have disputed CSCB's claims about the project's community benefits. They have challenged planning permission for the scheme through the High Court, arguing that the scale of the scheme will have a detrimental impact upon neighbouring residents and views of protected buildings, namely Somerset House. These forms of resistance highlight the contested politics that remains beneath the surface of the regeneration consensus brokered by SBEG and its partners.

Section 7.4 considers the power relations surrounding another aspect of SBEG's (re)development agenda, specifically, its claim that public realm improvements can unlock the area's regeneration potential and deliver benefits for the whole South Bank community. A case example, the long-running Jubilee Gardens re-development, is discussed. It demonstrates the complex inter-relationships involved in delivering projects of this nature, and shows that SBEG has been a key agent in pushing for improved public spaces reflecting its members' aspirations for a 'world-class' South Bank. While earlier iterations of the Jubilee Gardens scheme were premised upon widely praised and inclusive forms of partnership working, latter stages of the project saw SBEG revert to a role as a technical expert and community participation largely suspended. This was explained as the only way to ensure redevelopment would be delivered before the 2012 London Olympic Games. This is another example of the group's ability to 'upscale' regeneration issues from the local to the global, a transition that saw participation suspended via a pragmatic logic wherein the core focus was to 'get things done'.

Finally, section 7.5 highlights the ways in which group's agenda is contingent upon and/or conditioned by the support of local authority personnel, something which SBEG is keenly aware of, despite its members' belief that, in the South Bank case, 'business knows best' (see chapter 5). This claim is revisited through a focus on the group's relationship with the London Borough of Lambeth. The chapter shows that, after investing significant effort in enhancing its relations with Lambeth by participating in bodies such as the LSP, SBEG has received support for its activities from the higher tiers of the Council, including its CEO and Leader. However, more junior officers remain resistant to the idea of working with a

business-led group. The failure of neighbourhood-working, a central government agenda, on which SBEG and Lambeth worked closely together for several months, demonstrates that the relationship between business-led groups and local authorities remains, despite high-level commitments to collaborative working, characterised by issues of mutual (dis)trust, and subject to concerns about organisational accountability and legitimacy.

The chapter also outlines a perceived 'cultural divide' between public and private sectors which, in SBEG's case, continue to shape the group's (in)ability to deliver its regeneration agenda. Together, the three case studies illustrate the complex nature of partnership working in the South Bank, the challenges associated with delivering the localism agenda and, moreover, shed light on the political activity that surrounds development and regeneration in the area.

7.2. Rationality, power and influence

> Power relations are extremely widespread in human relationships. Now this does not mean that political power is everywhere, but that there is in human relationships a whole range of power relations that may come into play among individuals, within families, in pedagogical relationships, political life etc.

As the above quote from Foucault (1996: 343 [1984]) indicates, unravelling the power relations that underpin social relations is a highly complex task. For some, this is because, as Bourdieu (1991: 163) argues, 'power is visible everywhere'. However, others, such as Allen (2003: 2) suggest that, while multiple and diverse 'geographies of power' characterise daily life, they are not always easily identified. Indeed, for Allen (2003: 2), 'in the rush to see power as something which turns up everywhere', we have 'lost sight of the particularities of power, the diverse and specific modalities of power that make a difference to how we are put in our place, how we experience place' (see also Lukes, 2005). Allen's (2003) conception of power and its spatial and political effects sits somewhere between the two readings of power identified by Dikeç (2005). An aim of this chapter is, in paying due attention to the 'specific modalities of power' to explore the *political* possibilities associated with space.

In doing so, the chapter suggests that Baeten's (2009) analysis of local power relations in the South Bank underplays the complex nature of inter-relations between those engaged in regeneration, and the critical role these relationships play in determining actors' relative levels of influence over local regeneration. As Bourdieu (1991) suggests, an awareness of the complexities of the inter-relationships that define social life is important in

understanding actors' capacity to exert influence since this depends upon recognition from others. As he puts it, '[f]or the philosopher's language to be granted the importance it claims, there has to be a convergence of the social conditions which enable it to secure from others a recognition of the importance which it attributes to itself' (Bourdieu, 1991: 72). For Bourdieu (1991: 106), the perception of others also determines organisations' ability to create authority around a particular reading of social life. As he explains, '[t]he authority that underlies the performative efficacy of discourse is a *percipi*, a being-known...which allows the consensus concerning the meaning of the social world which grounds common sense to be imposed officially, i.e. in front of everyone and in the name of everyone' (Bourdieu, 1991: 106).

As previous chapters have shown, SBEG has been a key broker in the search for consensual solutions to local development and regeneration issues. For Bourdieu (1991: 106), the ability to bring others into a consensual arrangement depends upon the acquisition of *symbolic capital*, a key component in social power relations and, in particular, in what he calls the 'struggle to impose the legitimate vision'. For SBEG, the enrolment and mobilisation of key 'persons, procedures and artifacts in the pursuit of...goals' has been key in legitimising the group's vision of place-shaping as being representative of interests other than those of its members (Latour, 1987 in Miller and Rose, 1992: 183). As section 7.3 demonstrates, similar techniques have been used by SBEG founder members and key partners, Coin Street Community Builders (CSCB), to generate support for the Doon Street development.

Another technique used by SBEG and its partners to underline its institutional legitimacy and enhance its organisational influence over local regeneration is the mobilisation of rational thought to produce what Flyvbjerg (1998) terms *rationality-power relations*. As chapters 5 and 6 have shown, SBEG has deployed rational argument in order to communicate its members' vision of regeneration in the South Bank. Over time, these, occasionally divergent, viewpoints have been converted into a series of organisational rationalizations that now inform SBEG's operational aims and objectives. Flyvbjerg's (1998: 228) research shows how organisations 'interpret and use 'rationality' and 'rationalization'' in the creation of power relations. This, he argues, is a crucial element in 'enabling power to define reality' (Flyvbjerg, 1998: 228).

Earlier chapters have shown how SBEG's members' views on what place-shaping should consist of have been brought together into an agenda that has become the blueprint for the regeneration of the area, while other visions of place-shaping, propagated by less-well resourced and more 'antagonistic' organisations, have been sidelined. This chapter considers Flyvbjerg's arguments, demonstrating that one way in which SBEG and its partners have sought to bolster their organisational influence is by avoiding what Flyvbjerg (1998) calls, *confrontational relations*. This, as Flyvbjerg (1998: 194) notes, is a key element in seeking to maintain rational discourse, since, '[a]ntagonistic confrontations...are dominated by the rationality of power'. For Flyvbjerg (1998) then, the maintenance of rational (as opposed to confrontational) relations, necessitates the close controlling of power relations.

Such reflections resonate with authors such as Mouffe who have observed the controlling or closing-down of debate and disagreement, through, for example, the pursuit of consensus and the marginalisation of oppositional forces. The following case example provides an illustration of the ways in which SBEG members have sought to control antagonism in order to maintain the illusion of 'rational' argument, in so doing, enhancing claims to represent community interests. The Doon Street case exemplifies the tensions between 'the official discourse', that defines the South Bank as a place for tall buildings and further economic growth, and what Dikeç (2007: 22) calls the 'alternative voices...which question the place assigned to them in the police order'.

7.3. "What's good for us is good for them": The case of Doon Street

As chapter 5 has shown, SBEG's operational rationality is underpinned by a contention that, in matters of local (re)development, "what's good for us is good for them". For Flyvbjerg (1998: 5), such sentiments undergo a process of rationalization whereby, 'reasoning quickly turns to rationalization and that dialogue becomes pervasive rhetoric under the pressure of reality'. This section shows how the concept of 'community need' has undergone a similar process of rationalization, wherein attempts have been made, by SBEG and its members, in this case the Coin Street Community Builders (CSCB), to align commercial development goals with the provision of community services. The case shows that, despite CSCB's attempts to represent the development as meeting a set of shared 'needs', some factions of the residential population have rejected these claims and have sought to destabilise the development and, moreover, challenge the dominant development discourse. The section considers what this means for our understanding of power relations in the South Bank, and

asks whether resident-led attempts to destabilise consensual development models are representative of instances of political mobilization 'aimed at opening up political spaces in the determined spaces of the police' (Dikeç, 2007: 22), or, conversely, and as Baeten (2009) suggests, further underline the 'post-political' nature of regeneration in the South Bank.

Doon Street

Located directly behind the National Theatre on Upper Ground, and largely derelict since the end of World War Two, the Doon Street site (see figure 3.1) has played a key part in the South Bank's contested development history. In 1974, plans by Heron Corporation to build a 32 storey hotel on the site were shelved as a result of the economic downturn, and it later became part of the controversial Richard Rogers' designed South Bank scheme (see chapter 4). Following the eventual resolution of the Coin Street campaign in 1984, Doon Street was transferred into the ownership of the Community Builders (CSCB) who opened their offices on the site. CSCB's scheme for the redevelopment of Doon Street was unveiled in October 2005. Masterplanned by architects Lifschutz Davidson Sandilands, the proposal featured a 48 storey tower containing 355 flats, an indoor swimming and leisure centre, a new headquarters for the Rambert Dance Company, public open space and shopping areas.

Figure 7.1. Doon Street scheme May 2007, sectional elevation

Source: CSCB (2007: no page)

Controversial from the outset, a local online newspaper SE1 News reported that, '[t]he height of the proposed development has been met with surprise and concern by some local residents given that CSCB's history is in low-rise, low-density housing' (SE1 News, 2005: no page). CSCB appeared unapologetic about the Tower's height, suggesting that it was

necessary in order to ensure the project was financially feasible. As the CSCB Director, Iain Tuckett, explained in a 2001 interview, 'One of the great failings of social enterprises is to confuse what your social objectives are with your economic requirements' (Bibby, 2001, no page). The Doon Street proposal, like CSCB's earlier OXO Tower redevelopment, is underpinned by what Tuckett describes as a, 'Robin Hood approach', where commercial lettings are used as a way to leverage funds to 'achieve social and community objectives' (Bibby, 2001, no page). These objectives are, as a CSCB and SBEG member explained in interview, based upon a rational assessment of community 'need',

> "when we approach any issue it's [by] thinking about, well, what's the need? Why is there a need? Why is what people are doing not working at the moment? ...and saying, 'Okay, well, is there a different way? Is there another way of doing this that will basically work better?'"

The notion of (perceived) mutual or shared need became a central feature of the debates surrounding the Doon Street development, with CSCB suggesting that it was well positioned to understand these since 'we are community builders and not just housing developers' (Building Design Magazine, 2007: no page). Instead, the group stress that, '[a]ll members of this not-for-profit company are local residents who have a shared vision for the future of London's South Bank' and are committed to making the area a 'better place in which to live, to work, and to visit' (Building Design Magazine, 2007: no page). As an extension of this argument, and in a statement reminiscent of SBEG's own operational vision, CSCB positioned itself as 'recognising all of the needs of our community, as well as understanding how the area can contribute to London's wider economy and environment' (Building Design Magazine, 2007: no page).

As Imrie (2009) points out, such statements reflect a recent, discursive shift by some property developers that are at least suggestive of a deeper engagement with goals of environmental sustainability, liveability and social inclusion within the industry. As a CSCB member explained in interview, the group's actions were informed by a desire to achieve broader, social goals whilst also representing a highly pragmatic approach to securing the financial viability of the development,

> "if you take the swimming pool that we've just got consent to build, very important for us was that we…created an ongoing revenue stream, that would mean that we could constantly renew the equipment, so that it was sustainable. Even though the charges that people can afford [to pay to use the centre] do not in themselves cover the costs. So for us seeing long term economics, having a business plan that stacks up, is absolutely fundamental to our thinking".

The bringing together of social, environmental and economic goals under the banner of urban regeneration was an approach favoured by the Labour government who, according to Helms et al (2007), saw value in a 'holistic' approach to city revitalization that revolved around themes such as quality of life and place attachment (see also Raco, 2007c, chapter 2). CSCB's claims to understand the needs of the community, alongside the economic realities of delivering development in the South Bank, should be seen within this context.

The group's claim to understand residents' views on regeneration was supported by reference to a 1999 MORI survey of visitors, residents and employees in the South Bank. Commissioned by the SBP, of which CSCB is also a founder member, the poll was designed to assess each user group's priorities for the regeneration of the area. CSCB asserted that the survey revealed residents' 'top priorities to be a public swimming pool and indoor and outdoor sports facilities' (Building Design Magazine, 2007: no page). Demonstrating how responsive the design brief was to community need, CSCB's Director explained how we, 'adjusted our programme and have since built four outdoor sports pitches and opened a family and children's centre' (Building Design magazine, 2007: no page).

However, others have questioned CSCB's ability to represent residents' interests, with one community representative suggesting, in interview, that the survey had been used to fabricate a consensus of need involving little or no direct consultation with the community,

> "[if you want to secure planning permission] what you don't do is go and ask people and talk to people, because if you ask people [in a survey] the right question you get the right answer...they [CSCB and the SBP] did a MORI survey in '99, [which] they financed, commissioned and skewed, I'd say..."it sort of said, 'would you like a swimming pool'? 'Would you like more sports facilities?' So they got a high [score for that], [but]...how [ever] much they tried the highest thing was that everyone wanted a library, that got the biggest figure, not the swimming pool."

CSCB's invoking of a notion of shared or singular 'community need', while, as the above quote suggests, itself contested, sought to downplay the controversies surrounding a development proposal of this scale and scope. This is suggestive of an approach to community relations that is based upon the denial of difference. For Mouffe (2005), this is unsurprising since consensus is, necessarily, based upon the suturing of disagreement. As she suggests, 'the creation of an identity [always] implies the establishment of a difference', which, itself is, 'often constructed on the basis of a hierarchy' (Mouffe, 2005: 15). Under these conditions, the divisive nature of local (re)development, and more specifically the

controversy surrounding the construction of a tall building in a residential area, is downplayed, or, to use Mouffe's (2005: 3) words, subject to a 'blindness to antagonism'.

In doing so, CSCB and its partners, including SBEG and the SBP who are supportive of the scheme, have employed what Bourdieu (1989: 69) terms 'strategies of condescension', 'by which agents who occupy a higher position in one of the hierarchies of objective space symbolically deny the social distance between themselves and others'. As Bourdieu (1989: 16) suggests, while this 'distance…does not thereby cease to exist', in emphasising mutuality, difference becomes a politically less sentient force, allowing agents to reap 'the profits of the recognition granted to a purely symbolic denigration of distance'.

The (symbolic) denial of difference can be seen in CSCB's claims that the Doon Street development meets a shared community need, a contention that undergoes a process of rationalization and is used to downplay political debates surrounding the size of the tower. Thus, for a community representative, CSCB's pursuit of a rational line of argument surrounding the 'need' for a swimming pool established a depoliticised context wherein the proposal could then be escalated in its ambition,

> "And from sixteen storey and a swimming pool underneath...the other half the site was going to be all affordable housing...and they haven't done that element at all, they only did one half of it....we formally were opposed to the proposal, but they [residents] opened their minds to it. And obviously they were getting used to the idea, well, maybe we will have a swimming pool around here, maybe a swimming pool would be a good thing".

The contention here is that, having engaged in what Bourdieu (1991: 106) terms the 'struggle to impose the legitimate vision', CSCB waited until the residential community had begun to adjust to the idea of having a swimming pool, before the scheme's affordable housing element, a planning requirement under the Mayor's (2004) *London Plan*, was quietly dropped. This precipitated the rolling out of a related 'rationality' that, due to the high cost of operating the leisure centre, the sale of 393 luxury flats would be necessary to make Doon Street financially viable. As an interviewee from the community sector claimed,

> "[S]o the whole idea of the swimming pool they were pushing and they [established] the principle, 'well, we could pay for it from some private development',[but then] they wouldn't have equivalent amount of affordable housing."

He recalled how, having revealed the Doon Street plans to the community in 2005, "we heard nothing for several years" until 2007 when CSCB issued a renewed planning application. From this point on, he argues, the group's approach to community engagement was what he called a "steam-roller job",

> "…that is they came to one of our [community planning] meetings...it was quite a depressing presentation because it was over two hours[long] and they just spent ages soft-soaping [the] management [because] everyone wanted to say 'What's this tower?' And when they unveiled this tower there [were] gasps of, 'What! ...at that point it was forty eight or fifty four [storeys]. Fifty four and they then brought it down to forty three."

He described the reduction in height as a "typical developer's trick you go too big and then you say, 'Okay, we'll take twenty percent off.'" The fractious nature of developer-community inter-relations is well-noted, and, as Imrie (2009: 94) notes, is frequently characterised by 'tensions and difficulties relating to defining who or what the community is that ought to be consulted'. The Doon Street case is no exception, and the ensuing months and years saw a struggle between CSCB and some resident groups that, in its focus on building height and the future development of the South Bank, had much in common with the original Coin Street campaigns.

While community consultations were held, with scheme plans installed at the Oxo Tower exhibition space for an extended period so that interested parties could view the scheme and offer their opinion using feedback forms, the irony is that, this time, it was CSCB who were cast, by some residents, as the profit-orientated developers threatening the character of the area by proposing a high-rise scheme not wholly dissimilar to the mixed-use scheme the original CSCB campaigners fought to defeat. As part of these protracted and often heated debates, CSCB's core principles, which enshrine the provision of affordable housing for local residents, were repeatedly called into question by some residents. This comment, made on a community online forum, in response to a planning decision, indicates the strength of some residents' views on the Doon Street development[23],

> This is only a victory for the developers! The neighbours and the rest of the city lose. The people who buy these places don't even live in them themselves. It's purely for money and sod city aesthetics, quality of life and other consequences (SE1 Forum, wjfox2004, Saturday 26 May 2007, 6.10pm).

[23] The comment is listed under the thread, 'Coin Street's revised plans for a tower of only 43 storeys - still a betrayal of their founding principles?'

Others made similarly negative remarks, with the chair of the Manor of Kennington Resident's Association describing the tower as 'aggressively tall' and part of a wider attempt to 'cram as many things as possible into...the northern tip of the borough' (SE1 News, 2007, see also figure 7.2).

Figure 7.2. Computer-generated image of the Doon Street tower

Source: CSCB (2007: no page)

The group's claims to act in the interests of the South Bank community were also called into question by an interviewee, who commented that,

> "these sites were gained by Coin Street by the community, for the community for specific uses, and what's being proposed now is...grotesquely different from what was being proposed, and there's been no process by which the community has come to agree this, it's been foist[ed] [upon] us, so we're presented with, not a fait accompli, that's not the right word, but 'this is the package'. We haven't gently got there."

Instead, the interviewee suggested, CSCB engaged in a series of tactics, largely behind closed doors, to undermine those opposed to the development. This involved, as they put it, turning key political figures, "against us",

> "we were then systematically undermined by Coin Street, they got the MP, who had always been very supportive, always had a good relationship but is closer to Coin Street than us, so the MP turned on us...we've a very good relationship [with Lambeth]. But this went completely sour...And this was Coin Street doing this all behind the boards, they basically tried to shut us down to stop us opposing their development, and...it's left a very bitter taste in the mouth, I have to say."

CSCB's recourse to rational argument, manifested in the construction of a concept of shared community need, and, according to some community representatives, the failure to engage 'traditionalists' opposed to the development in open debate, resonates with what Flyvbjerg (1998: 26) describes as 'technical expertise used as rationalization of policy, of rationality as the legitimation of power'. Indeed, drawing upon Flyvbjerg's work (1998: 27), CSCB's attempts to ameliorate difference and replace antagonisms with the notion of a shared need (and mutual benefit) could be seen as indicative of the organisation's ability to exert influence over development politics since, 'power defines what counts as knowledge and rationality, and ultimately...what counts as reality'. For Mouffe (2005: 50-51), such processes can be seen as part of the 'erasure of the adversary', a process which forecloses the possibility of a radical politics through which 'existing power relations can be challenged'.

In the Doon Street case however, challenges to existing power relations were in evidence and it was not only a dissatisfied 'militant' faction of residents unhappy with the proposals that sought to intervene, and, in the words of Dikeç (2007: 151), 'open up political spaces...by acting on the well-limited and over-determined spaces of 'the police'. Instead, following Lambeth Council's planning application committee's decision to approve the development in August 2007, English Heritage and the London Borough of Westminster, two key players in an increasingly contentious set of debates surrounding planning, development and heritage in London (see Charney, 2007, Markham, 2008), jointly requested the decision be called into the Secretary of State arguing that, 'the community benefits on the basis of which planning permission is sought are unlikely to materialise; yet the grant of permission would set a damaging precedent [regarding building height]' (SE1 News, 2008: no page).

In his subsequent report on the Doon Street proposal, the DCLG's Planning Inspector appeared to corroborate these concerns, and he recommended the Secretary of State (SoS) refuse permission, on the grounds that the tower appeared 'stark and oppressive', 'disturbingly prominent and oppressive in scale' and would threaten the view corridor from St James's Park to the South Bank (Wilson, 2008: 104, 100, 101). However, Hazel Blears, then Secretary of State for DCLG, disagreed, arguing that 'the impact on this view would not be as great as the Inspector fears, and would not be unacceptable' (DCLG, 2008c: 4). In her decision letter she refers to the views of the CEO of the South Bank Centre, who, along with

the rest of SBEG's member organisations were largely supportive of the scheme, and argued the Doon Street would 'result in the area's further enhancement...forming a development that would complement the architecture, urban design and dynamism of the South Bank' (DCLG, 2008: 6). Significantly, Blears' also found the scheme to be of 'substantial' benefit to the local community, in 'what is acknowledged to be a deprived area', and suggested that it would bring 'lasting wider social benefits, such as employment and contribute towards economic growth' (DCLG, 2008: 10). Claims about the economic and social benefits perceived to flow from commercial development have underpinned much of the UK's regeneration policy since the early 1980s and closely mirror arguments, made by SBEG and its partners, about the way to ensure the future success of the South Bank for the wider community.

But for others, CSCB's ability to speak on behalf of the needs of the wider community was not a given, and, in interview, a community campaigner argues that existing Coin Street tenants felt that there was no mechanism through which residents felt they could raise concerns about the proposed development directly with CSCB,

> "a lot of people...who live in Coin Street...came here to tell us about their objections with it and their unhappiness about it and their anger about it, but didn't dare do anything about it. They wouldn't say anything, they wouldn't write letters of objection, some of them did, [but] most of them didn't, they wouldn't say anything in their Coin Street Co-ops and they had no concept of how they, even if they did, how that affected the Coin Street Community Builders. And there was a very odd, Coin Street Community Builders sit there and then there's the Co-ops, and they don't have a relationship of governance between them, the builders in some way oversees what the co-ops do...and there's no going back up the chain, so if the Co-op's unhappy about something the builders at the top have to respond, there's no relationship like that, there's no AGM where they can go and make their complaint felt. And people were literally frightened to say what they thought about it and how opposed to it, even people living right opposite it."

Suggestions that there was a lack of open debate or accountability between CSCB and residents is something firmly rejected by CSCB who point out that they held public exhibitions in relation to the Doon Street proposals in October 2005 and May 2007 and also presented the scheme to the WCDG at its regular community planning meetings on 26 February 2003, 2 November 2005 and 6 June 2007.

One way of interpreting these two diverging viewpoints about the adequacy of community consultation in local development may be to reflect upon the limitations of the planning process itself which, for Haughton and Allmendinger (2010a, 2010b), can be seen as part of

an increasingly post-political context wherein conflict around local development has not been removed but, rather, displaced and deferred. For them, the contemporary planning system has become one characterised by a series of stage-managed processes that, while outwardly orientated towards community engagement, is subject to subtle yet clearly defined parameters about for what is (or is not) open for debate (Haughton and Allmendinger, 2010a).

One consequence of this, according to Haughton and Allmendinger (2010a), is the prevalence of High Court Appeals in relation to matters of planning and local development. The Doon Street scheme was brought to the High Court by English Heritage, a lobbying body committed to the preservation of historic England, and Westminster City Council, along with a local resident William Ashton, who, with the support of the WCDG, instigated a High Court appeal against Blears' decision on the basis that she had been 'mislead by a briefing paper prepared by her civil servants' which stated that the scheme would be provided at no public cost (SE1 News, 2010). The hearing, held in June 2009, underlined one of the quirks of planning appeals system in that it saw WCDG, a body funded by the London Borough of Lambeth, supporting William Ashton, appear as a claimant (alongside Westminster City Council and the Historical Monuments Commission for England), against the Secretary of State, the London Borough of Lambeth (this time as a *defendant*), the GLA (all of whom had approved the scheme at planning), and CSCB.

As this extract from diary notes made at the hearing demonstrates, debates over the SoS's decision to grant approval were conducted at a very fine grain of detail, and involved trying to establish the extent to which the proposed building will (or indeed will *not*), impact upon neighbouring buildings, in this instance, the Royal Festival Hall,

> One of the barristers is putting forward the case for impacts of the Doon Street scheme on the Royal Festival Hall, or perhaps to be more accurate, seems as though he is taking the Inspector's report apart in a lengthy analysis that is hard to follow and appears mired in detail, and involves him making statements such as the following, 'The tower would be seen to dominate and fails to preserve the setting of the Grade 1 listed building. The Secretary of State agrees it would have an impact on the setting, but it wouldn't be 'unacceptable' and would preserve the character of the South Bank centre, i.e. not be harmful, as agreed with the developer, CABE liked the design, but it can't be read as having a neutral impact, it can only sensibly be read as having some harmful impact…' and so it goes on!

After 3 days of hearings, Judge Justice Mole upheld the SoS's decision to grant approval for the Doon Street scheme, however in his summing-up he agreed with the claimants that 'there are genuine questions to answer about the meaning of passages in the Secretary of State's letter', and left the door open for the claimants to take their case to the Court of Appeal (BBC, 2009: no page). The legal proceedings surrounding the scheme finally came to an end in May 2010 when the Court of Appeal dismissed a further challenge to the planning permission made by local resident William Ashton.

The Doon Street case reveals how, despite attempts to downplay the controversy surrounding the tower's height by recourse to rational argument, and particularly, depoliticised notions of shared, singular or mutual community 'need', local place-based visions remain fought over in the South Bank. In seeking, albeit unsuccessfully, to overturn the planning consent for the Doon Street proposal, some residents, along with (and much like the original Coin Street campaigns) major institutions such as English Heritage, sought to challenge the dominant discourse of local redevelopment. This is suggestive of a local politics, which, while subject to measures of control by certain key agents, is characterised by at least the *possibility* of political activity, whereby attempts to contest hegemonic visions of local place are made.

The Doon Street case also reveals some of the core power relations involved in the politics of local development, and, more specifically, highlights the 'unsettled' and contested notion of 'community' in the South Bank (see Staeheli, 2008). While several members of CSCB were the leading lights of the resident-led Coin Street Campaign, their proposal for a high-rise, commercially-funded development, pitted the group against some of the residents it claims to represent, revealing the fragility of the consensus around place-shaping as well as the complex and shifting nature of local power relations. As Flyvbjerg (1998: 27) suggests, understanding the links between these relations and rationality is core since, '[t]he rationality produced is actively formed by the power relations which are themselves grounded and expressed in processes that are social-structural, conjunctural, organizational, and actor related'. In the case of Doon Street, these processes coalesced around a specific, place-based vision, the delivery of which is examined further in the following section.

7.4. Prioritising the public realm: Jubilee Gardens

As previous chapters have noted, SBEG and its partners' recourse to rational argument has been a technique used in its brokering of a consensual, place-based, vision of development. This vision is underpinned by the group's desire to enhance the state of the public realm, both as a reflection of its members' interests in creating a 'world-class' place, and as part of its commitment to provide a 'better South Bank for all'. This section considers how SBEG has sought to translate this rationality into a deliverable, public realm improvement project. In doing so, it draws upon interview data in which SBEG members and staff, and other community representatives, were asked to reflect on the influence the group has over regeneration and development in the South Bank.

As part of these discussions the section introduces a second case study, the long-running Jubilee Gardens (hereafter JGs) redevelopment which, much like the Doon Street case, highlights the delicate nature of local business-resident relations and reveals tensions surrounding the ownership and delivery of 'community' regeneration schemes. The JGs case is also revealing of the tools used by SBEG to push public realm improvement schemes towards delivery. These include, the 'scaling-up' of projects from the local, regional and even global scale, in order to secure political support and funding, the use of mechanisms such as section 106 planning agreements, and the closing down of community consultation, at select intervals, in order to 'get things done'.

According to DiMaggio and Powell (1983: 150) '[o]rganizations compete not just for resources and customers, but for political power and institutional legitimacy, for social as well as economic fitness'. SBEG is no exception, and while it has had some success in securing financial resources via state-led programmes such as the SRB (see chapter 5), the group's ability to leverage political support is fundamental to its capacity to influence the regeneration agenda. Interviewees referred to the SBEG's skill at bringing the South Bank's regeneration needs to a wider political audience, something that was seen as particularly important in a context whereby other central London areas were competing for the same funds in the regeneration game. As a SBEG staff member explained,

"[if] you take something like Waterloo City Square project, [and compare it to] the Exhibition Road project in South Kensington, which everyone's talking about [and] has been twenty years in the making...and it's had the full might of Westminster City council behind it...the fact that we're actually competing with that, successfully, really after only two or three years of [Waterloo City Square] even being an idea is...a sign of some clout".

Indeed, it is argued that the group's careful managing of local political relations is a core component of its organisational influence, and, as a staff member suggests, a source of SBEG's collective power in relation to local development,

"we have got collectively the power to get something done and influence stuff, by virtue of the fact that I can write to Simon [Milton, London's Deputy Mayor] and it generates quite a high level meeting, which surprised me, I must admit. Or, to put it...in a more day to day way, we judge where to use the contacts we have to get things sort of registered and to try and get [projects] moving forward."

For Miller and Rose (1992: 184), the capacity to influence local political relations is contingent upon the construction of shared interests or what they term, 'common modes of perception'. As earlier chapters have shown, SBEG's founding members created a coherent, focussed and (purportedly) inclusive agenda around public realm improvements that was designed to deliver, through pro-active, entrepreneurial local partnerships, the regeneration the area was perceived to require. The momentum that the group built around this agenda was, in large part, a result of SBEG's skill in establishing relations 'between the nature, character and causes of problems facing various individuals and groups...such that the problems of one and those of another seem intrinsically linked in their basis and their solution' (Rose and Miller, 1992: 184). As this interview exchange with a SBEG member demonstrates, the organisation is highly attuned to where links between its (public realm) agenda and wider, political, goals can be forged (see also chapter 6),

"A: I think we're now very clear what we want to do, the question is actually how we go about achieving it, especially with a lot of the Mayor's agencies now being focusing on the Olympics, and I think the big challenge we have now, with the Olympics coming up, is that Westminster and the West End are now making a big push with Boris [Johnson], because they feel he's a kindred spirit, as a Conservative mayor, to make [the West End and Westminster] the focal point for mayoral investment, prior to London 2012.

Q: So it's not so much about negotiating "where we're going" [as a group]?

A: ...I think it's more a question of how we deliver that now....It's [about identifying] what's the most efficient way of doing it and with the Mayor's arrival there's a huge restructuring going on in the LDA, TFL, change of priorities, reallocation of resources, and so the question now is how do we make the best [of that]...what are the new programmes, how do we plug in? We're very clear what we want.

SBEG's awareness of, and its ability to 'plug-into', these broader, regional, national and international agendas was also felt to enhance the group's organisational status and thereby, as Bourdieu (1991) suggests, bolster others' perception of its ability to deliver regeneration programmes. As a SBEG member explained,

> "[The Mayor] he and his advisors recognise South Bank Employers' Group as probably the most important employers' group in London, who they want to work with, and they see...as a delivery agent for certain initiatives".

The Jubilee Gardens redevelopment, a long-running and contentious scheme which aims to 'transform this flat, featureless patch of grass into a garden worthy of its location next to the London Eye and opposite the Houses of Parliament' (Jubileegardens.org, 2010: no page), is one example of how SBEG has 'scaled-up' a localised regeneration project to capture the political will necessary to drive the project towards delivery. As Burstein and Linton (2002: 387) suggest, 'organizations are most likely to influence policy when they change their activities in ways that attract legislators' attention'. In the case of JGs, this has involved (re)positioning the project as not only critical to maintaining momentum around neighbourhood regeneration, but also of central importance in ensuring success on the global stage provided by the London 2012 Olympic Games. As the *Planning Statement for Jubilee Gardens* (Quod planning, 2010: 12) suggests, 'the South Bank will be at the centre of the Cultural Olympiad, attracting even more visitors and the focal point for the world's press'.

The JGs case, outlined in more detail below, demonstrates that the process of 'up-scaling' is not only what Brindley (2000: 375) calls a 'pragmatic adjustment to changing circumstances', namely the economic slowdown that began to take effect in the latter half of 2008, but is also an ideological and (post) political process that has involved (re)presenting the South Bank as a commercially and culturally rich resource, critical to the maintenance of London's 'global city' status (Sassen, 2001). The Jubilee Gardens case also shows how, following a successful community consultation process, the project was taken 'behind closed doors' by small team of SBEG members to ensure that, as had happened many times before, the opportunity to deliver the project was not missed. As the global significance of the project was emphasised, objections by factions of the community to the newly streamlined scheme were simultaneously 'localised', a post-political process which saw local needs particularized (see Zizek, 2009).

Jubilee Gardens

Opened in 1977 to commemorate the Queen's Silver Jubilee, Jubilee Gardens (hereafter JGs) is a 15,500 sq metre park adjacent to the London Eye (see figure 7.3). The Gardens have a complex land-ownership and development history, and were the subject of disputes during the Coin Street years as campaigners sought to preserve open spaces such as JGs, as well as fend off speculative office developments (see chapter 4). Following the abolition of the GLC in 1986, JGs were transferred to the London Residuary Body (LRB), who later sold the park to Shiryama Corporation, who also own County Hall. In 1994, the freehold of the Gardens and the neighbouring Hungerford car park passed to the Arts Council of England, before being transferred to the South Bank Centre under a long lease.

Figure 7.3. The Jubilee Gardens site

Source: Author's own

The Gardens have been the subject of several redevelopment plans which have sought to improve the appearance of the park and deal with long-term problems such as poor drainage, as well as more recent concerns such as littering associated with growing levels of footfall in and around the London Eye[24]. Figure 7.4, a photograph taken in the late-1980s, shows the site at its most neglected shortly after the abolition of the GLC in 1986.

Figure 7.4. Jubilee Gardens in the late 1980s

Source: Lifschutz-Davidson (1997: 13)

The JGs site has long been a focus of activity for SBEG members who have sought to improve the appearance of the gardens and bring them into line with riverside improvement schemes which have raised the quality of the public realm through measures such as new signage. As this extract from a SBEG-commissioned 1997 *Riverside Walkway Landscape Strategy* (Lifschutz-Davidson, 1997) shows, the plans for JGs mirrored other

[24] According to a recent footfall count, 5.5-6.5 million people use the Gardens annually (jubileegardens.org, 2010).

SBEG-led public realm projects and emphasised the importance of new street furniture, improved lighting and paving.

Figure 7.5. Extract from Jubilee Gardens improvement plans, 1997

13.3. Special project: New and extended Jubilee Gardens

Total cost: £3,304,000 (extra cost of car parking below, £2,350,000)

The concept for the new Jubilee Gardens is intended to provide a unified vision for the whole site in between County Hall and the Hungerford railway viaduct. The following brief has been developed as part of the wider consultation exercise:

- A grassed recreation area for recreation, festivals, events, sunbathing and picnics
- A performance area with facilities for hosting both small and larger concerts and events
- A children's play area with high safety standards, fenced to be dog free
- Areas with tree and shrub planting and seating for lunch time relaxation
- A quiet garden area with scented shrubs and flowers in raised beds which can be enjoyed by partially sighted people or people with disabilities
- Well-designed and managed kiosks to provide refreshments
- Well-paved and lit pedestrian routes and paths connecting all of the main access points around the site, including Waterloo station, Hungerford Bridge and the riverside walkway

Source: Lifschutz-Davidson (1997: 37)

The upgrading works outlined above were due to be delivered in 1998, yet at the time of writing, plans for the improvement of JGs had yet to be delivered. New iterations of the improvement plan have been produced intermittently over the years, and JGs has become another 'flashpoint' around which conflicts about local development visions have erupted. As a SBEG member explained in interview,

> "alongside [the] Oxo Tower [redevelopment] and [the] Richard Rogers [scheme] [Jubilee Gardens] was the other big bone of contention with the community, [because as soon] as the GLC was abolished, the local community, because they could see that this was an area for a lot of more office development, wanted the park not only upgraded but extended up to Hungerford car park."

More recently, JGs have been the subject of a protracted set of debates between the South Bank Centre (SBC) and British Film Institute (BFI), who want to expand their operations onto the neighbouring Hungerford car park site (see figure 7.6), and some local community groups, namely the *Friends of Jubilee Gardens*, who want to see the park extended in scope and size onto the car park site.

As a SBEG member recounted in interview,

> "So I knew that the park would never be core for us but it was core to the community, and we were in a sort of Mexican stand-off really, where they were saying, 'We'll never allow you to develop on Hungerford car park.' And we're saying, 'If you take that view we're not gonna invest in the park.' And all it was doing was souring the whole community relationship, and actually I felt would undermine our ability to do something everyone wanted, which was to do the Festival Hall up".

Figure 7.6. Hungerford Car Park

Source: Lifschutz-Davidson (1997: 13)

Looking to move redevelopment plans beyond this stalemate, SBEG members sought a middle ground, in which business and residents could try and move beyond past disagreements and seek a compromise over the future of the site. A SBEG member explained the process,

> "So I came up with this idea of a sort of a Trust, which would comprise of Shell, Shiryama Corporation, the London Eye and ourselves, together with the community and local businesses, and we'd form a Trust and together we would create a vision for the park, a brief. Select an architect, design a scheme, get planning consent and get the funding".

The 'Trust' referred to represents a governance model, which, as previous chapters have shown, has successfully been used by SBEG in the pursuit of a more consensual and less-combative approach to the regeneration. For Davies (2002b: 303), such models represent an ambitious form of partnership-working which seeks to establish a level of 'mutual

understanding and embeddedness' to the 'extent that organizations develop a shared vision and joint working which leads to the establishment of shared working and self-governing networks'. The resulting partnership body, the *Jubilee Gardens Steering Group* (JGSG), was established in 2003, and tasked with securing 'consensus on a brief' (Personal communication).

Chaired by SBEG's CEO, the Trust is also comprised of residents, local business representatives and landowners, many of whom are also SBEG members. In interview, community representatives spoke favourably of the consultation process instigated by the Trust which saw residents' comments fed directly into the design team selection process,

> "we were very closely involved...from start to finish on the consultation itself, how it would be done, on the scopings, the work, the brief, the design...and Jubilee Gardens is really interesting how we had a very strong view that, for example, we did not want...Jubilee Gardens to be this avenue between Waterloo Station, the Shell Centre, and The Eye, which to some extent since The Eye's gone in it has become, and we wanted a redevelopment, we all agreed we wanted [that], [and] we'd need several million pounds [worth] redevelopment of Jubilee Gardens, we wanted to put trees and we wanted to put flowers and all these sorts of things...".

Others agreed, with the representative of a local cultural organisation commenting that the scheme headed by landscape architects 'West 8' "went to planning [in 2006] with a ninety two percent approval of the community" (see figure 7.7).

Figure 7.7. The winning West 8 design

Source: Jubilee Gardens.org (undated: no page)

However, he felt, more fundamentally that, "what it's done is to build up a lot of trust, and we've actually worked out something we all agree about". As Giddens (1994) identifies, the creation of *active trust*, that is reciprocal inter-relations that are continually negotiated between *reflexive individuals*, is more important than ever in a society where the ties of 'traditional' social groupings are gradually being eroded and partnership governance is to the fore.

While community representatives spoke positively of the consensus-building process surrounding the selection of the West 8 scheme, for some, a consensus that does not 'imply any form of exclusion' can never be realised given the, 'hegemonic dimension of discursive practices' (Mouffe, 2005: 89). Mouffe's comments resonate with latter stages of the JGs scheme. Having secured a development plan with widespread community support, legal difficulties surrounding a covenant that entitled Shiryama to develop an underground car park on the site, coupled with a lack of funds, meant the scheme was never implemented. As the revised planning statement (Quod planning, 2010: no page) explains, a new and streamlined version of the scheme was required if the delivery of the project was to be assured,

> Lambeth Council originally approved a scheme for the park developed by landscape architects West 8 in 2006. Due to cost and legal reasons, the scheme has been revised but retains the essence of the design…The overall mission for the project is to create a park which is as soft and green as is sustainable. It was the idea of a lush, green park, with undulations, flower beds and turf of the highest quality and the addition of many new trees which appealed strongly to local residents and employees as well as visitors to the area. These elements are still central to the design, as well as a simplified path network and generous seating.

In addition to funding constraints that were further exacerbated by the 2008 credit crisis, an impetus to speed up the implementation of the JGs project was provided by the looming deadlines of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee celebrations and the Olympics, both due to be held in London in 2012. Demonstrating SBEG's and its partners' awareness of the value of 'upscaling' regeneration issues from the local to the global scale, the Chief Executive of the Southbank Centre commented in a press release, '[t]his will be a world-class park and a focal point for 2012' (West8, 2010: no page).

Ensuring that this deadline would not be missed was a task that SBEG members decided was best achieved without community input and a select group of representatives from the SBC, Shell and upper management tier of SBEG was formed with the intention of streamlining the project. This small and select group held a series of closed-door meetings which, according to a SBEG representative, were necessary to secure the "viability of the whole project". Stressing the importance of the project for global London appeared to resonate with the Mayor's office and in March 2010, it announced £1.5 million funding for the scheme from Transport for London's Local Implementation Plan (LIP) Major Schemes budget. Mayor of London Boris Johnson, said of the scheme,

> When the world comes here during the 2012 Games we want the place to look its best and for people to have enjoyable journeys through the area. These great projects will help enhance the Capital as a whole, giving local communities and visitors improved public space, and providing a legacy for London that lasts for many years to come (West 8, 2010: no page).

Echoing Abercrombie and Forshaw's (1943) description of the South Bank some 50 years earlier, the CEO of SBEG commented following the announcement,

> On behalf of the Jubilee Gardens Steering Group, I wish to thank the Mayor and Transport for London for the funding which recognizes the need for the Jubilee Gardens to be made worthy of its prime location and become a new green landmark for the capital. It will be intensively used by local residents and employees and by millions of visitors. We are determined to deliver this exciting project in time for The Queen's Diamond Jubilee and London 2012 (West8, 2010: no page).

SBEG's positioning of itself as a dynamic and delivery-focussed body is, as earlier chapters have shown, core to its (self) identity as a responsive but yet also deeply embedded neighbourhood organisation, and is one which its members' frequently invoked when asked to reflect upon the extent of the group's role in the delivery of regeneration in the South Bank. As one member commented,

> "...the other issue [SBEG's] helping with at the moment is Jubilee Gardens...because they're trusted by all the community [and] stakeholders...they've managed those meetings, they've managed the budget...they ran the competition for the architects, they ran all the public consultation meetings, they submitted the planning application and went to the planning committee. So you know…that is [an example of] something that we wouldn't be where we [are] without South Bank Employers' Group, I'm quite convinced."

This was a viewpoint that was also held by non-SBEG members, and, in interview, some community actors praised the group's ability to get things done. As a local resident who has lived in the area for over 30 years, commented, "local businesses have been ploughing money in to the area". He felt that schemes such as the *Riverside Walkway Improvements*

had improved the area, and reflected that, "my wife and I often walk down there now, I like it, but I hardly ever see other residents"[25]. An extract from a research diary recorded at a community planning meeting reveals, other residents were also positively disposed towards SBEG's leadership of the JGs scheme,

> The next person to speak says he wants to thank [SBEG staff member] and his team for 'pulling everything together so quickly'. I think he's also a resident, although he's quite a bit younger than the average attendee at the meeting, which may be significant in relation to his relationship to SBEG and also in terms of his attitude towards the pace of changes in the area. Could it be that residents who don't have a memory of past, ideological 'battles' between business and residents are more open to groups such as SBEG playing a more prominent role in delivering projects in the 'community interest'?

However, reassurances, made in the revised planning application statement, that the scheme was 'in essence…very similar to that which was consented previously, although it has been simplified...[with] a number of elements of the previous scheme…being omitted altogether' did not quell the concerns of all community members, some of whom expressed anger that design features residents had deemed important had either been scaled back or removed altogether (Quod planning, 2010: no page). As diary notes from a community meeting at which the revised scheme was presented by a SBEG representative show, old tensions between residents and the business community, now leading on the delivery of the revised scheme, looked to be resurfacing,

> It's [a community representative's] turn to speak now, and I get the impression he's been dying to have his say since the meeting began. He is quite measured but direct in pressing home his point of view and says the first thing that he's concerned about is that he's "not known what has been going on with the Jubilee Gardens scheme...I thought the idea was dead". He claims that when he'd tried to investigate what was going on with the project his emails weren't answered. As a result he says he's "disappointed not to have had the opportunity to be involved in design team discussions, which is a concern".
>
> He doesn't appear angry, but says, firmly, that "we've haven't got that right and we need to fix it in the future". He poses some questions to those present at the meeting, "We want a decent park, but should we go for a compromise or not?" Addressing the audience he gestures to a slide of the revised design scheme and asks, "is this a park you will want to go to? Will you feel safe? It's not just for tourists". His major concern, he continues, is that, in the revised scheme, residents' comments have only been 'expressed', rather than directly fed into design team meetings.

[25] This absence was explained by a community representative who described, in interview, that he had been told by some long-term residents, that they felt "alienated" by the speed of change in the South Bank. He recounted how one resident had told him that she used to visit the riverfront area to mourn her husband, but now felt that that the area was "too busy" to do so.

> His tone is slightly combative; I wonder if he is trying to stir up a bit of unrest around the renewed scheme, or whether this is reflective of what he views as an exclusionary way of working that has characterised the latest iteration of the re development? He also expresses concerns that the scheme has "lost everything that made it special", and asks, "is it too bland? Has it lost its identity? Will still be a special place?"

The community representative's concerns about the level of input residents had into the revised proposal are not uncommon, and highlight a wider set of debates relating to community engagement and participation, particularly in relation to development and planning. Authors such as Colenut and Cutten (1994) point towards the 'chequered history' of community participation despite what they term the 'extensive' application of the concept of community in urban (political) debates. Others are more critical still, with Swyngedouw (2009a: 610), describing participatory governance as an 'post-democratic institutionalised configuration', and one of the 'populist gestures' through which the political has been evacuated (see also Baeten, 2009).

As this diary extract illustrates, some members of the local community took a similarly sceptical view of the merits of the revised scheme, with one resident describing the revised scheme as a "stitch up",

> After he speaks, an older female resident comments that the scheme is now, 'bland' and a 'boring solution', rather than something that 'fires the imagination'. She regards the suggested solution for the car park area, which involves leaving the area undeveloped for now, but with the option of expanding the park onto it in future if and when funds allow, as a 'stitch up'. It strikes me that this may be the reason why some SBEG staff members appear dismissive of some of the older and more combative community actors, and perhaps their views are seen to represent the dwindling 'militant' factions of the community whose ideas are unrealistic, out of date and unrepresentative of the majority of residents.

In interview, the question for one resident, who had lived in the South Bank area all of his life was, "what's in it for us?" Referring to the dramatic changes he had seen in the area in recent years, and which he felt had irreversibly transformed the social fabric of the area, this resident's question is one which New Labour's approach to regeneration, with its insistence on what Raco (2011) calls, a 'non-ideological philosophy of what matters is what works', appears intent on brushing aside. Yet the rapid pace of change seen in the South Bank is striking, and was underlined by the same resident and a fellow member of a local residents' association in a walking tour of the area. Over a 2-hour period, they pointed out many of the physical, social and economic shifts the area had undergone that was manifest, most clearly for them, in the changing physical fabric of the neighbourhood.

Figure 7.8. Images taken during resident-led walking tour of the South Bank area

The walking tour began in Greet St, where I met two local residents. We walked past several housing estates and re-used railway arches that now house restaurants and cafes, towards The Cut, a newly regenerated street that is now home to popular gastro pubs and is anchored to the east by the Jubilee Line station at Southwark. Continuing north and west back towards Waterloo Station, we took in a range of building styles, as well as marginal/disused and newly regenerated sites that, for my tour guides, underlined the changes in landuse seen here in recent years.

Source: Author's own photographs

Assessing the extent to which SBEG's activities have fed into these wider changes is difficult, and the group's contribution to the delivery of regeneration and local economic development is one that more commonly revolved around a conception of the group as a trusted, non-partisan, broker of interests, rather than a body 'in control' of local regeneration. This interview exchange, with a SBEG member, is fairly typical of how many summarised the extent of the group's influence over local regeneration,

> "Q: if SBEG hadn't come about in the way that you described it, do you think the South Bank would be a different place today, and how?
>
> A: It would not…have evolved like it has. You know, SBEG has played a very key role…and one in, if you like, attracting investment into the area, and [in] particular investment in the public realm, in community facilities, in shared welfare, if you like".

Others referred to SBEG's local knowledge, expertise in forging partnerships and its status amongst many as an "honest broker", in suggesting that, while the forces of economics would have seen the South Bank regenerated anyway, the group had played an important part in smoothing the path for the continued roll-out of the growth agenda. As an interviewee commented,

> "I think a lot of these developments would've been a lot harder and more costly to do, and some of them might not have happened. But I think the area would've...just through sheer force of money that was available…would have regenerated, and certainly the London Eye would've happened without SBEG, because it was, because [of] the [policies] through central government and Lambeth...and others [which] have been directed by government to assist this and to put any private views we had to one side on it...Tate Modern would have happened without South Bank Employers' Group, and that provided…the link and [kick-started] the regenerative thing. And from that, once it created the footfall that created the potential value to be exploited, so these things would've happened but they would've been more complicated, longer and more costly, I think.
>
> Q: It's interesting, so from what you're saying there, just to kind of paraphrase, I suppose, it's been an enabling role, primarily.
>
> A: Yeah. A catalyst for change and by bringing things together and showing a coherent plan, able to bring a lot of stakeholders behind that and saying, 'Yes, we see how this fits in and we think it's a good idea.' And lobbying quietly behind the scenes, you know".

Others used similar language, likening the group's role in the delivery of regeneration to one of a "catalyst locally" that was related to "the advantage of having some fairly big players [on board] who we can influence". The group's success at attracting investment to the area had seen it move, in the words of one interviewee, "beyond the public realm" and into a role more akin to one of a community advocate, whereby "energies are being

channelled into positive outlets rather than into negative ones". One example of this can be found in a member's description of SBEG's role in developing a unique planning-gain model that sees a percentage of the London Eye's annual profits diverted into a 'Community Chest' fund that is used to support community programmes. As a SBEG member explained,

> "South Bank, from a culture point of view...is now seen as strategically important, is now preserved in planning frameworks. So…but then subsequently what's happened is as that physical regeneration has happened and the area's been transformed, and because...a number of its members are developers, then we've started to get involved in helping to facilitate the Section 106, because...of the dysfunctionality of Lambeth [they are] completely incapable of organising Section 106 [and] it means this area has not benefited. The community hasn't benefited...So what SBEG's been doing is negotiating a community chest pot, a consensus with the community as to what would be the priorities for expenditure, and then helping Lambeth negotiate those."

A more cynical reading of the above statement might be that Section 106 funds are being used to secure the long-term relevance and sustainability of the SBEG. There appears to be some evidence for this, and, as an extract from the 2006 SBEG Business Plan states, 'It is hoped that the S106 policies can be used to further Manifesto Action Plan policies where appropriate' (SBEG, 2006: no page).

The revised Jubilee Gardens redevelopment scheme which, at the time of writing, was awaiting a planning decision from Lambeth Council, is also closely intertwined with the SBEG agenda, and the management and maintenance plans proposed by the Trust following the completion of the project feature SBEG-run services such as the South Bank Patrol and Graffiti Removal Service prominently. While SBEG is aware of the need to ensure its own interests are represented within schemes such as JGs, to suggest that the group's input amounts to serving only its members' interests is short-sighted. Indeed, according to a JGs press-release, the 'partnership between the landowners and the local community that will maintain the park to the high standard befitting the cultural centre of London' is 'just as important' as ensuring the project is delivered (west8, 2010: no page).

The JGs case demonstrates SBEG's ability to work into and exploit opportunities that arise from governmental agendas, in this case, those associated with the forthcoming Olympic Games and Queen's Silver Jubilee. In seeking out such opportunities, SBEG is only too aware of the need to work in partnership with governmental actors, whose support, both politically, and in the awarding of funds, is a key part of the legimitisation of the group's involvement in regeneration. As Burstein and Linton (2002: 386) suggest, organisational

influence is highly context-dependent and 'success depends on both the resources they deploy and the context of their struggle for influence'. The following section develops this line of argument in relation to business-local authority relations, and, more specifically, considers how SBEG is dependent upon others, and particularly local authority representatives, to legitimise its activities in matters of local economic development and regeneration.

7.5. Trust, culture and negotiating the public-private divide

As earlier chapters have shown, SBEG's multiple institutional identities have been used reflexively by the group, to incorporate its members' interests into various policy agendas and regeneration programmes. Linked to this, a core task for SBEG has been to seek endorsement from external, particularly non-business, actors for its activities, and moreover, to add legitimacy to its claims that it is able to act in the interests of the wider South Bank community. As part of this process, the group has sought to distance itself from an image as a wholly private-sector interest group, and, instead, has (re)positioned itself as a trusted, non-partisan, neighbourhood advocate. As earlier chapters have shown, in doing so, SBEG has drawn upon its status as a public-private, or 'non-profit' body, as well as embracing the principles of partnership working, in the process, assuming a role as a key player in the regeneration and wider governance of the South Bank.

This section argues that this reflects a pragmatic realisation, made by SBEG staff and members that, despite being the body it believes is best placed to 'get things done' in the South Bank context, it is not able to deliver its regeneration agenda alone. Instead, a core focus, for SBEG's staff in particular, is to secure positive and mutually productive working relations with external partners, including local councillors and MPs, but also regional, central and local government actors. This section focuses on the group's relationship with the latter group, and, specifically, its relationship with the London Borough of Lambeth, the local authority with administrative responsibility for the majority of the South Bank area (see chapters 4 and 5).

It considers the extent to which the group's influence over the politics of regeneration in the South Bank is mediated through its relationship with local government actors, and explores the ways in which members' belief that the group is best placed to deliver regeneration in a complex and challenging development context is tempered by the

recognition that, as a private-sector interest group, endorsement of its engagement in local governance by those with a democratic mandate remains critical.

As chapter 2 has shown, the relationship between business groups and local government actors has long been a focus for academic research, much of which has been concerned with understanding the influence public-private actors exert over urban politics. For many, such as Strange (1996: 155), political power is not something 'pre-given' to local business elites, but is instead, 'derived from the incorporation of businesses into the networks of regeneration'. Strange's (1996: 155) contention is that by inviting the private sector to participate in the realm of local governance, state institutions have granted local businesses a 'legitimate and state-sanctioned role to play in the regeneration of local economies'. For him, this 'state-led' form of involvement is something over which private sector actors have little purchase since it is mediated by 'the changing relations between central and local government, and between local government and communities' (Strange, 1996: 155).

This statement can be questioned on the grounds that SBEG and its partners *have* sought to intervene in these relations. Indeed, historically, SBEG and its partners have positioned themselves as an *alternative* authority in the delivery of localised regeneration in a context whereby political interest in the South Bank area was held to be absent or minimal (see chapters 4 and 5). However, despite these claims, SBEG is also acutely aware of its inability to deliver regeneration outside of multi-sector partnerships. More specifically, the endorsement of its activities by local government, who have a democratic mandate to serve in the interests of local people, is something that SBEG has pursued as part of its efforts to expand its influence over the delivery of regeneration in the South Bank. In this sense, SBEG has actively encouraged *more*, rather than less, intervention by the local state in matters of neighbourhood regeneration, and has become frustrated when this is not forthcoming. The intermeshed, and yet frequently oppositional nature, of the relationship between two institutions is highlighted in the following interview exchange with a SBEG staff member,

> Q: So is the paradox, in a way, that you're here because Lambeth are dysfunctional, but now that you're here, in terms of delivering on the things, it makes things difficult because they're still dysfunctional?
>
> A: Yes. But I don't think it makes it as bad, because if it weren't for us nothing would happen.

As earlier sections have demonstrated, questions of legitimacy and power are to the fore in understanding SBEG's capacity to influence development agendas and deliver public realm

improvement programmes. According to Weber (1922-3), the two concepts are intimately connected since, 'the legitimacy of the power-holder to give command rests upon the rules that are rationally established by enactment, by agreement, or by imposition' (in Gerth et al, 1991: 294). This statement is suggestive of a reading of power that, as Gordon et al (2009: 16) identify, is 'grounded in the assumption that the rationality of those sanctioned with authority, namely management, is a given'. For Gordon et al (2009), this is a cause for concern since, following this line of reasoning, legitimacy is framed as 'largely unproblematic – a matter of shared ceremony and ritual.'

Others such as Clegg (1989) have suggested that the legitimacy of formal structures and rule-based authority 'has to be regarded as a contingent variable dependent on local and temporal circumstances' (in Gordon et al, 2009: 16-17). This is certainly the case in the South Bank instance, and, as the remainder of the chapter illustrates, SBEG's relationship with Lambeth, which is defined by issues of (mis)trust, authority, legitimacy and accountability, is one which defies easy characterisation. Instead, it is continually evolving, while the dynamics of power between the two institutions are constantly being regenerated.

Gordon et al's (2009: 16-17) conceptualisation of organisational authority, in which they emphasise an organisation's ability to assert authority is dependent upon whether a 'person's 'right to power' is perceived as legitimate in the norms of the social system', is instructive here. As earlier chapters have shown, SBEG has sought its 'right to power' by investing time in partnership governance bodies, such as LSPs. Engaging in these organisations has not only provided a means for SBEG to secure its reputation as a knowledgeable neighbourhood advocate, but has also allowed the group to establish itself as a legitimate presence in the governance of the South Bank. Key to this has been the formation of strategic alliances in an attempt to create inter-organisational trust between SBEG and governmental actors, since, as Flyvbjerg (1998: 138) suggests, 'alliances are an important part of the rationality of power'.

The multiple, and complex, alliances involved in the governance of the South Bank (see chapters 5 and 6), present several challenges for the delivery of regeneration, yet, as authors such as Atkinson (1999) suggest, the conflictual nature of partnership-working is rarely acknowledged. Instead, conceptions of the benefits of shared working, such as this statement by DCLG, are to the fore, and hold that, 'public services are better, local people more satisfied and communities stronger if involvement, participation and empowerment are at the heart of public service delivery' (DCLG, 2006: 45). Such views are also evident in local authority regeneration strategy, and neighbourhood-based delivery is identified by Lambeth First as a key activity in its Local Area Agreement (LAA) called, *The Story of Place* (Lambeth First, 2008: 10), which states that,

> Lambeth First wants to challenge the traditional 'one size fits all' approach to service delivery, championing a bespoke approach according to a locality's individual identified needs. The diversity of Lambeth demands it. The partnership will adopt a 'twin track' approach. In the short term, we will build on extensive opportunities to capitalise on, and consolidate, existing activity at the neighbourhood level in three key areas: Brixton, Waterloo and Clapham.

Similar language was used by SBEG staff who expressed frustration at what they termed the Council's "one size fits all approach", as an interviewee commented,

> "I mean a big part of the local authority problem, and I think a lot of organisations like ours now that BIDs are active in the UK, I think a lot of them will find that larger authorities, the way that they procure services is on a one size fits all basis... It's like, well, Brixton and Kennington Road are the same as the South Bank in terms of its needs. Well, patently wrong. You know, it's very complicated for them to start splitting up character areas, let's say, and delivering service, but actually that's what they should be doing if they want to deliver proper service".

Following the publication of *The Story of Place*, with its stated commitment to adopt a more 'bespoke' approach to neighbourhood management, SBEG saw an opportunity to build upon expand its operations further into local service delivery, a strategic area identified in various business plans as critical to the group's future sustainability (see chapter 5). In doing so, the group emphasised its past experience in neighbourhood-management, as this extract from a (SBEG, 2008: no page) document illustrates,

> As both borough councils begin to develop their proposals in relation to neighbourhood governance and stewardship, SBEG believes it can offer unique opportunities to both administrations in trail-blazing effective 'place management' arrangements and promoting community empowerment.

Lambeth First (2008: 10) appeared to endorse SBEG's claims of expert knowledge in neighbourhood service delivery, and the group's work in the South Bank area is identified as a model to be replicated elsewhere in the Borough,

> There is...a strong track record of business-led neighbourhood-based delivery, primarily through the South Bank Employers' Group, which brings together major organisations in the neighbourhood... to coordinate regeneration and delivery of public realm projects, promote tourism and investment, improve place management and community safety, and generate opportunities for Lambeth residents to access employment opportunities in the neighbourhood.

However, despite this shared enthusiasm, the research revealed a number of stumbling blocks to partnership working. The first concerns the fleeting nature of localist policy in which the 'goalposts' for partnership working appeared, almost constantly in the view of many interviewees, to be moving. As a SBEG staff member commented, "I mean you hear the talk about partnership working, the LSP…And (he laughs)...and where does it go?" One reason for this, it was suggested, was the transient nature of politics at the central and local government level which resulted in frequent staff changes that destabilised the policy context.

Other barriers to partnership revolved around issues of trust, legitimacy, accountability and authority. As Geddes (2006) identifies, these tensions are often at the core of devolved modes of governance, and they are issues that SBEG are finely attuned to. In a 2008 document, the group speculates on the difficulties they anticipate may accompany the hand-over of governance powers to a business-led body,

> Many existing 'external' partnerships...often struggle to gain council recognition as delivery or neighbourhood management vehicles, and the same difficulty may possibly apply to SBEG, even though the Ward Councillors of both authorities are involved in the SBP. Many council officers, particularly within middle/lower management tiers, are not used to working in this way and can be resentful of external partnerships so that even where there is senior-level support, operational effectiveness can still take time and patience to develop. Added to these fairly common difficulties, potentially utilising a body which is private sector-led brings additional complexities whatever SBEG's track record (SBEG, 2008: no page).

These fears proved well-founded, and although, as chapter 6 has shown, the group has developed a strong presence on governance bodies such as the LSP, as part of a drive to enhance collaborative working, neighbourhood-working appeared to fail in much the same way as SBEG had envisaged. As a local authority representative explained, inter-organisational trust, or rather a lack of it, was a key factor in these failures,

> "There's still a bit of unease around [SBEG's relationship with the council], and I think that that's really about the degree to which any sort of localising of governance or service delivery...is democratically accountable, the degree to which an essentially private sector led organisation can command the authority to manage public space".

SBEG members seemed only too aware of these sentiments, and, in interview, a staff member explained some local authority officers' reluctance to work with the group as stemming from fears that Council jobs would be threatened if further responsibilities for service delivery were devolved to privatised bodies,

> "..the service heads, let's say, within the council that may be responsible for their graffiti removal see that as a huge threat. They see that as a real threat and it's very difficult to overcome that".

Others expressed similar viewpoints, describing some Council representatives as holding an "old municipal view…[that we] are trying to supplant the council and do things the council should be doing". Another local authority representative was described as being "Old Labour". As an interviewee commented,

> "he can't separate the fact that we're arguing for what we think is the best use of scarce resources to make Waterloo better, usually with the support of Waterloo Quarter and WCDG and the local councillors and anything else, he just sees us as big business. He's very old Lambeth, he's been there a very long time. Old Lambeth and Old Labour, and he just resists it…even when we're self-evidently right".

Interestingly, a community representative made similar reflections on the complex relationship between SBEG and local authority actor. As this extract from an interview illustrates,

> A: "The council have always had a love-hate relationship with them.
>
> Q: This is SBEG?
>
> A: Yeah...they have never fully wooed the council, and there's enormous scepticism I get from officers in particular and from...some [of our] members. Some members just love them...but most of them are wary, some are very strongly wary, which is quite frustrating as well, cos many times I'm on [SBEG's] side, saying, 'Come on, work with us.' And they're [Lambeth] saying, 'Ooh, we don't really trust those guys, they're looking after their own interests, they are a special interest group, but they're also a group who are threatening our, the council's, raison d'être.'
>
> [It] goes back to the cowboy world I was talking about earlier, if SBEG exists...we don't need to have Lambeth's transport people. The highways...we don't need them to be delivering that, SBEG could be delivering that. They should be paying the money to SBEG who deliver it, you know, there could be, there was a phrase for it, I've forgotten what it's called now but the council is considering that...neighbourhood working, that's what they're calling it, neighbourhood working. Which doesn't mean working with communities, it means working with organisations

like SBEG, but it means devolving it to local organisations and social enterprises and such like, where you can. And to some extent that's what we do, we have a service level agreement with the council to deliver consultation...

So I get frustrated and SBEG does [too] that the council doesn't trust them. At the same time I also understand and have the same sort of relationship [with SBEG]. The council clearly has an interest in why they don't trust them, because they are threatened, SBEG threaten some of the council's own jobs".

Drawing upon the work of Bourdieu, Larance and Porter (2004: 677) emphasise the importance of building 'trustful, cooperative networks' in the accruing of *social capital*, a core component in the acquisition of power relations. For them, regular interaction between organisations 'enables personal trust to form and to then transition into social trust' (Larance and Porter, 2004: 678). It is these social ties that Larance and Porter (2004: 678) argue, 'mobilize social capital' by providing 'valuable ways of cultivating reputation—an essential foundation for trust'. This is a process that SBEG were observed to be engaged in, as this interview exchange with a staff member illustrates,

Q: "And how fundamental is something like trust in trying to build up that shared working, partnership working?

A: It's...vitally fundamental, isn't it, 'cos if everyone sees every suggestion or comment we make as a threat to their statutory duties or municipal authority or personal or professional future you can't have a proper discussion. And that's, I guess, the basis on which...middle ranking [local authority] officers never answer [or] return phone calls or answer emails, they just...[hope] either the subject goes away or you manage to deal with it in a meeting than they have to be at or you elevate it, if it's big enough to elevate".

Much of the mistrust referred to here was felt to stem from a perceived 'cultural' divide between the public and private sectors that while eroding, was still in evidence (see chapter 2). At times this seemed almost stereotypical in nature, and was based upon a characterisation of the council functions as 'bureaucratic', while business interests were felt to revolve solely around profit margins. A typical description was, as one interviewee commented, of a "public sector thought process" as opposed to a "corporate view of the world". The two sectors were felt to be, in some ways, ideologically distinct, as one interviewee commented, "I think they have a fundamentally different perspective, yes they do, of necessity because [businesses] prime driver is profit, that's legitimate and that's how it is". As chapter 5 has shown, the reality is much less clear-cut, with the lines between public and private sectors becoming increasingly blurred, in part due to the existence of hybridised, locally-dependent bodies such as SBEG.

However, interviews revealed that for many such sectoral divides persisted, with several participants describing the need for a "culture change" in order to achieve genuine partnership-working. As one local authority representative commented, what is needed is a "cultural change, around how we work with business", that also required, "sensitising other bits of the council...as to how to work effectively with business, and that's not an easy job". This involved, he suggested local government being more aware of the ways in which businesses operate, something he felt was currently lacking,

> "I mean, just at a very basic level...[there is] a failure, and sometimes a lack of understanding of the fact that, if a business person comes to our partnership meeting, that is directly costing that business money, in a way that it's not costing the council money, because those officers, that officer's time is paid for."

For him, this had resulted in a rather uncritical attempt to engage businesses in forums such as the LSP, without appropriate consideration of the mechanisms needed to ensure actors' were able to contribute to partnership-working,

> "…so there's kind of [a tendency in the council to say], 'oh yeah, we'll get some local businesses to sit on [a board], well, why? What are they going to get from it? Have we done the ground work that means that we're going to make that accessible to them, we're not going to break down all the public sector jargon?"

Flyvbjerg (1998) makes similar observations about the challenges of inter-organisational working and emphasises how a positive working relationship between business representative groups and state actors is matter of constant concern and attention for both parties. Far from being a given, Flybjerg (1998: 84) shows that this relationship is continually being (re)negotiated, and, as such, decisions reached between the two 'cannot be understood as an isolated, unique event'. They are, instead, the result of a 'well-maintained, well-functioning power relation' that reveals a long-standing 'contract' between the two organisations (Flyvbjerg, 1998: 85).

Flyvbjerg (1998: 85) emphasises that this agreement is not static, but instead is 'constantly being reproduced' through interventions by both parties. These observations resonate with SBEG and Lambeth's interactions, which, despite the voicing of shared commitments to the values of neighbourhood working, remained, in some instances, characterised by mistrust and misunderstanding on both sides. As a SBEG staff member reflected in interview, this stalled attempts to work in what he described as a "genuine partnership",

> "Now, what does partnership mean? Well, partnership can mean genuine partnership, you know, if you were to get your thesaurus out and start looking at the definition of it, it can mean that, and then of course it can mean that we just write on a piece of paper that we're doing it in partnership with them and we get on with it and do it anyway, kicking and screaming, you know, the difference, you know what I mean? So that's the fact of the matter, you can't, if you was to sit around and wait for this sort of like utopian genuine partnership approach to evolve you'd be still sat here with nothing achieved. These things haven't been achieved through genuine partnerships on a hundred percent of the occasions, for certain. They've been achieved by an ambitious board with quite an ambitious list of needs and activities that they wanted addressing and pushing for, pushing, pushing, pushing. So there has been a lot of kicking and screaming over the years".

Indeed, frustrated with the Council's failure to consult them on a number of policy issues, and keen to preserve the fragile good relations that it had built up with some local authority representatives, SBEG staff produced a *Memorandum of Understanding* in an attempt to clarify mutual roles, responsibilities and highlight areas of shared concern and interest (see figure 7.9). This informal 'contract' was also designed to reaffirm the principles of neighbourhood working which SBEG representatives felt had received support from upper tiers of the Council, but continued to be resisted by more junior officers. As a SBEG staff member commented in interview this was felt to be having a fundamental impact upon the delivery of regeneration in the South Bank,

> "So you get all the promises at, you know, at the top table and when it gets down to the real people that do the delivery they'll come up with a whole, they'll spend more time telling you why they can't than engaging with you as to how they could. That's the reality of the situation".

As Flyvbjerg (1998: 86) observes, the fostering of a more positive working relationship is an important task for groups such as SBEG since it is 'by paying constant attention to the established cooperative relationship' that interest groups can succeed in influencing local planning, development and regeneration decisions. Figure 7.9 is also demonstrative of the importance SBEG places upon securing Lambeth's endorsement of its activities, and also indicates the group's (self) awareness that its own levels of influence remains, at least in part, conditional upon the support of local authority actors (see Bourdieu, 1991).

Figure 7.9. Extract from memorandum of understanding

Steps needed to develop a collaborative approach

While we are greatly encouraged by the commitment of the Council and LSP to neighbourhood working, and the high degree of mutual trust and agreement at Cabinet and Senior Officer-level, at times the 'flexible approach', recognised as key to successful neighbourhood working in the SCS, is not in evidence. What is needed to ensure partnership working is strengthened and taken forward at all levels is an approach to collaborative working based upon a culture of information sharing, good communication, and consultation with key partners.

In order to facilitate this, we have outlined below the main barriers we have encountered in working with Lambeth Council and hope that with a new partnership approach these impediments to efficient neighbourhood delivery can be removed.

The key issues from SBEG's perspective are as follows:

- Commitment to neighbourhood working at different levels of the council is inconsistent
- Service requests from model areas are not effectively auctioned by departments
- Understanding about the model areas existence and work programme is not widely known or advertised throughout the partnership
- Neighbourhood working format is not an effective or efficient use of resources and its objectives are unclear
- More resource needs to be committed to ensuring neighbourhood working can be rolled out
- Reluctance by officers to recognise SBEG's role in the neighbourhood, its need to be consulted, and its ability to bring local knowledge and coordination
- Failure to understand the nature of SBEG and its commitment to support the Council's operations
- Lack of trust and openness – problems are left to fester or are buried, causing delays and missed opportunities
- Lack of responsiveness – we often wait long periods for responses to communication
- Unclear financial arrangements and payment delays
- Lack of leadership and coordination across different Council departments
- Unwillingness to focus or adapt outsourced activities to fit the neighbourhood model e.g. call-centre information, lighting, PFI
- Conflicting messages to external bodies, especially potential funders – SBEG has thought it has secured an understanding about priorities, which is then not adopted consistently across officers or departments

Source: Reproduced from original unpublished document

Setting out the principles and parameters of partnership working in this way is, for Flyvbjerg (1998: 86), part of a 'power maintenance strategy', in which organisations invest significant effort in developing and maintaining cordial working relations. Flyvbjerg (1998) shows how, in matters of local development and planning, this often stems from the desire to preserve rational argument and, relatedly, to avoid open confrontation. Indeed, the securing of positive working relations with state institutions is particularly critical for a special interest group such as SBEG, which, as earlier sections have noted, has sought to mobilise the support of councillors and MPs in order to reaffirm its involvement in local governanace. As a SBEG staff member commented in interview, the group's relationship with local authority representatives was also critical in determining its institutional 'power',

> "Power, we do have power, but ultimately…you can have the power but if you're talking to the London Borough of Lambeth, for example, you have the power to get the chief executive of that local authority through the door, he comes through the door, you have the discussion, he goes, 'Of course we want to work in partnership and of course we want to deal with this issue. I'll go back and I will make sure this happens.' Tick-tock-tick. You know. How does it happen? Well, you know, it's back to a dysfunctional, a potentially dysfunctional, let's say, organisation. So the chief executive says 'I want you to do this.' Someone goes off, the divisional director or whatever, goes off, starts the conversation, it always ends up back down at the sort of like, you know, the business unit head and it stops there".

Such pessimistic assessments of the day-to-day realities of partnership working cast doubt over the overwhelmingly positive pronouncements about the benefits of partnership that are made in policy documents across local, regional and central government. They also highlight the difficulties that both business-led and governmental bodies face in delivering the policy goals associated with the New Localism (see chapter 2). These difficulties are not unique to the South Bank, and yet, without shedding empirical light on these processes, uncritical assessments about the mutual gains of working in partnership are likely to predominate, as a SBEG staff member pointed out,

> "You know, to actually understand whether what you're reading [about partnership] is in fact true you need to go and talk to the partners that are involved in delivering, which I know you're doing now, you know".

7.6. Conclusion

This chapter has sought to unravel some of the complex and shifting power relations that surround the delivery of regeneration in the South Bank. It has shown that SBEG and its partners have the capacity to influence key aspects of the development agenda, something which has been fostered through the group's deployment of rational argument, and more specifically, the claim that its members' agenda represents the best way to deliver a 'better South Bank for all'. As the Doon Street case demonstrates, this has involved the mobilisation of post-political tactics, such as the construction of a singular or shared notion of 'community need'. While CSCB has used claims about mutual community benefits to circumvent requirements relating to affordable housing levels, and to manage concerns about the scale of the scheme, these measures have been contested by some local residents who have sought to prevent the development going ahead via High Court Appeals. These instances of resistance suggest that attempts to impose a consensual (and exclusionary) regeneration vision have not been wholly successful. Yet, the failure of those opposed to the Doon Street scheme to change what Dikeç (2007: 21) calls the 'established order of things' suggests that the possibility of and for *political activity* – defined as 'whatever shifts a body from the place assigned to it or changes a place's function' – while not entirely closed off, is being eroded in the South Bank instance (Rancière, 2003: 208-9, see also Baeten, 2009).

The Jubilee Garden's case, in contrast, is revealing of a softer approach to community engagement that was widely praised by several members of the residential population and was felt to have done much to build trust between groups that had, in the recent past, been fiercely opposed. However, more recent stages of the project have seen SBEG voice a set of highly-pragmatic rationalizations about the need for rapid delivery in straightened economic times. This saw a streamlined, business-led team take over the running of the project in order to, in SBEG's words give the project a "realistic" chance of being delivered before the Olympic Games in 2012. While this decision appears to have paid dividends in light of the Mayor's recent announcement of funding, some factions of the community have expressed disquiet that one consequence of this was what was described by one interviewee as the "watering-down" of resident input.

At one level, this underlines SBEG's ability to determine what Dikeç (2007: 21) calls 'objects of intervention' for example, by controlling which regeneration projects were deemed 'open for discussion' by simultaneously involving the 'global' significance of the JGs project, while containing residents' complaints about changes to the scheme to the local level. Yet, the chapter has also revealed the contingent nature of SBEG's influence over local place-shaping. As a special-interest group, the group has had to invest significantly in what Flyvbjerg (1998) calls a *power maintenance strategy*, which involves the preservation of 'rational' argument and the courting of those with a democratic mandate to legitimise the group's activities. In this sense then, SBEG's organisational influence is characterised by variable '*modalities of power*' (Allen, 2003).

As section 7.5 has shown, not all local authority actors support the transfer of governance powers to a private-sector led group. This has resulted, in SBEG's opinion, in a series of barriers to collaborative-working, such as poor communication, under-resourcing and a lack of responsiveness. This suggests that the business agenda should not be viewed as a homogeneous, all-powerful entity, but instead as dependent upon a complex set of institutional inter-relations that are continually evolving and shifting. In particular, section 7.5 shows that, despite a stated commitment to work towards shared working at neighbourhood level, there remains distrust, even unease, amongst some local authority officers at the prospect of devolving governance responsibilities to a special interest body.

Together, the three case examples are revealing of the contingent and variable nature of SBEG's level of influence in matters of local regeneration, and indicate that, far from being in control of the South Bank's regeneration, many of the group's activities remain dependent upon others' (conditional) acceptance of its involvement in matters of local governance. It is therefore not surprising that SBEG and its partners have sought to extend their organisational influence by maintaining stable, non-conflictual, power relations. This has involved the bypassing of those perceived as representing an outdated view of the South Bank's future development, and the insertion of a consensual politics of place that hinges upon the 'rational' claim that public realm improvements and further commercial development can deliver benefits for all.

One reading of SBEG's attempts to maintain what Flyvbjerg (1998) calls 'rational discourse' is that it represents the group's *pursuit of* greater institutional legitimacy and influence, rather than a *reflection of* its status as the 'dominant' actor in the regeneration of the South Bank. Indeed, as Flyvbjerg (1998: 37) suggests, 'rational argument is one of the few forms of power that those without much influence still possess; rationality is part of the power of the weak'. This is a critical distinction to make since it suggests that matters of local (re)development, while characterised by a range post-political features, including the pursuit of a consensual approach to regeneration, and the separation of global and local issues as part of the 'up-scaling' of regeneration schemes to the global scale (a process which concurrently sees community concerns become localised and particularized), are still far from being fully under SBEG's control. While the emergence of *genuine political activity*, defined by Rancière (1999: 30) as that which 'makes visible what had no business being seen, and makes heard a discourse where once there was only place for noise' in the South Bank seems an increasingly remote possibility, the cases reviewed here indicate it is not an *impossibility.* It is for this reason, the research suggests, that claims that the South Bank represents a post-political environment are prior.

Chapter 8. Conclusions: The private sector and the local (post)politics of regeneration

8.1. Introduction

> [W]hilst New Labour has developed strong centralizing instincts, a penchant for centralized micro-management of local social and economic policy initiatives, and a frenetic desire to discipline the Labour Party and control the wider political agenda, it has also conceded – albeit reluctantly – some (at least potentially democratic) constitutional reforms at national, regional, and urban levels. Even in these regards, however, decentralization has been marred by 'control freakery'.

Jessop's (undated: 23-4) stinging assessment of New Labour's political devolution agenda is one of a number of critiques that have pointed out the former government's contradictory tendency to, on the one hand, retain centralised control over urban policy agendas and budgets, whilst, on the other, pronouncing the 'democratic' benefits to be gained from more localised forms of service delivery, strategy-making and urban management (see also Morgan, 2007, Pike and Tomaney, 2009). The thesis has shown that, beyond these policy pronouncements, the 'on-the-ground' realities of local partnership working are similarly contradictory.

Thus, in the South Bank, while local employers are key agents in the brokering of a consensual vision of local (re)development, they are also shown to be just one part of a complex web of inter-institutional networks through which local regeneration is negotiated and delivered. This, however, is not to suggest that the practices of local place-shaping are enacted on an even playing-field. This research has demonstrated that business-led groups occupy an advantageous position in the regeneration game. SBEG staff's expertise in the fields of regeneration, planning and development enables the group to keep abreast of policy developments. This provides the group with opportunities to consciously (re)align its agendas to reflect government priorities, a practice which enhances the likelihood of securing funding in the 'generation game'.

SBEG's membership, many of whom are senior managers of major local corporate and cultural institutions, have utilised personal and corporate connections to raise awareness of the SBEG agenda with political figures of influence. Together, these factors ensure that SBEG is well-place to play a role in matters of local policy making and delivery in an

increasingly pluralised system of local governance, and efforts have been made to ensure that, in the words of a SBEG member, “they have the ear of some quite powerful... people”.

The group’s focus on securing the recognition of key governmental and other political figures has also been a key component in enhancing its own institutional legitimacy and ensuring its ‘place at the table’ in local regeneration practices. In the words of one SBEG staff member, maintaining good working relationships with local political leaders is “important just because you need that political buy-in, and that’s what I think…BIDs and some council officers don’t understand, the power of politics”. SBEG, however certainly does, and has made inserting itself into the midst of local political relations its business. However, despite this, the research has shown how the group positions itself as a “neutral” body, a claim that is problematic given that local (re)development *always* involves the negotiation and exercise of (multiple and selective) interests.

The definition of the political is a core theme of this research, and in exploring the mechanisms through which interests are identified and mobilised, the thesis has looked into instances, but also the failures of, political activity, following a reading of politics as a ‘‘process’...the emergence of a collective subject acting under the presupposition of equality, an acting which disrupts a particular police order’ (May, 2009: 116).

SBEG have been shown to be instrumental in both the creation of a ‘police order’ or dominant discourse around the meaning of local place, and in its maintenance. This has seen certain regeneration projects placed outside the realm of public debate, a process which has, in turn, restricted opportunities for the opening up of political spaces. The careful management of conflict is justified as a way to avoid past conflicts around the meaning of local place that are perceived, by some, to have slowed the delivery of regeneration in the South Bank. One example of this is SBEG’s brokering of a consensual vision of development that revolves around its members’ interests in an improved public realm but which suggests that these improvements will deliver benefits for all.

These practices, as authors such as Mouffe (2005) rightly point out, constitute a threat to democratic politics since, in emphasising the mutual benefits that flow from physical regeneration, the contested nature of local place-shaping is denied, a process which, eventually, sees the possibility of politics foreclosed. The representing of regeneration as a

politically neutral space in which the formulation of mutually beneficial solutions is possible was evident in New Labour's urban programme which enshrined the collective benefits of partnership working. The SCs Plan sought to balance these agendas while sustaining economic growth, a goal that has been brought sharply into focus following the global financial crisis (see 8.6).

In *delivering* regeneration New Labour's focus was, ostensibly, about adopting the measures 'that worked', without ideological attachment to either 'public' or 'private'. For Baeten (2009: 238), this has resulted in the emergence of 'mighty business-friendly partnerships' into which the interests of 'community' are then (unevenly) inserted. While in this research, Baeten's (2009) claims about the regeneration of the South Bank, particularly in relation to the influence of business-led bodies, are questioned, they highlight some of the problems that surrounded New Labour's democratic reform project.

As Thornley et al (2005) note, this aimed to plug the 'democratic deficit' that Labour argued had resulted from the proliferation of unelected bodies under former Conservative governments. While the reorganisation of local governance seen under New Labour saw the creation of what were supposedly inclusive, community-focussed 'regeneration partnerships', the South Bank case shows that unelected special-interest bodies have assumed a central role in institutional forms such as LSPs, through which their claims to represent community wide interests in matters of regeneration are enhanced.

Reflecting on the localised spatial effects of New Labour's urban policy agenda is a core contribution of this research and, in the remainder of this concluding chapter, the main findings of the research are set out, aligned, thematically, to the research questions outlined in chapter 3.

Section 8.2 considers the research contributions in relation to the formation, mobilisation but also conceptualisations of, the business agenda. In 8.3, discussions turn towards findings around the themes of inter-organisational working and the power relations involved in local (re)development. Section 8.4 discusses the research's contributions related to discussions of a post-political and/or post-democratic approach to governing. In section 8.5, the focus turns towards the methodological contributions of the research and considerations of the lessons, for policy and academic research, to be learned from the

South Bank case. This leads into a discussion, in 8.6, about future research agendas and directions, a section that also reflects on the contemporary situation in the fields of urban regeneration, governance and planning.

8.2. (Re)characterising the business agenda

A central aim of this research has been to identify, and critically reflect upon, the ways in which private sector interests in regeneration are identified, brought together into a recognisable 'agenda', and then mobilised. These are matters that have received much attention from urban scholars over the years, yet gaps in knowledge remain, most particularly around the effect that New Labour agendas had over the business stake in matters of regeneration, and also in considering the motivations that underpin the decision, by business actors, to engage in matters of local governance.

One contribution of this research has been to explore Cook's (2009) observation that the decision, for private-sector actors, to undertake a role in local regeneration is not a purely rational matter. The research supports this assessment and, in so doing, highlights the socially-embedded nature of the business agenda. It contends that the business agenda is a social construction, created by identifying shared concerns amongst reflexive individuals that hold particular understandings of, and have varied relations *with*, local place.

Cox and Mair's (1998) concept of local dependence was used to theorise observations of the South Bank case, and a finding of the research is that the business-led agenda should be conceptualised as not only constructed *in*, but also a product *of* local place. In the South Bank instance, the SBEG agenda, and many of its member organisations' interests, are shown to be embedded in the locale, a factor which explains, at least in part, the group's 'self-starter ethic' and its conviction that, in improving the physical fabric, this collective of local businesses, cultural representatives and landowners' "know best".

These findings also highlight the spatialised nature of local business interests, something that existing literatures are not always sensitised towards. Furthermore, it suggests that members of business-led bodies operate on the basis of tacit understandings of local place that, in turn, (re)define the approaches taken in activities such as place-management. This is significant since, under New Labour directives such as the TCM and BIDs, business groups have become increasingly involved in activities such as the operation of local security

patrols. As chapter 6 has shown, such activities can be seen as part of the creation of 'pseudo-private' spaces wherein the core goal is the accumulation of value (Mitchell and Staeheli, 2006).

Jones et al. (2010: 10) point towards the concept of 'choice architecture' which highlights how the spatial characteristics of environments affect the life choices we make, an idea that is gaining prominence amongst policy-makers who are increasingly seeking to intervene in, and influence, social behaviours (see 8.6). The popularity of these ideas within policy circles and which are manifest in agendas such as place-shaping, indicates that further research into the spatial components, and effects of, regeneration agendas remains pressing.

A second core contribution of the research has been to (re)consider the individuals and organizations that constitute contemporary business agendas. It has highlighted the increasingly hybridised and *reflexive* nature of private sector groups, who are aligning themselves with mainstream 'business issues' such as local economic development but also, increasingly, with 'softer' social and/or lifestyle issues. In so doing, the research has contributed to the study of industry groups such as property developers who, as Imrie (2009) notes, are adopting the language and/or goals of sustainability in seeking to demonstrate a softer or more community-focussed style of working.

This was a trend that was also noted in this research, and SBEG was shown to be increasingly sensitive towards the need to reflect, and contribute towards, sustainable development goals and the enhanced 'well-being' of local communities, reflecting government directives such as the SCs agenda. The interests of SBEG's membership were shown to be reflected in a diverse set of programmes that, while including the operation of services such as a local employment centre and youth sports programme which members connected directly to the building of *sustainable communities*, also remained firmly underpinned the core messages of jobs, growth and public realm improvements.

While efforts have been made to ensure the local business agenda continues to reflect these core concerns, the research has shown the concept of a singular business agenda is problematic. Far from being a coherent entity, the business agenda is comprised of the interests of institutions ranging from global corporate to governmental and third sector

bodies. This observation represents a wider set of processes in which the blurring of social categories such as 'public' and 'private' is occurring, a development which has been further exacerbated by processes of globalisation and, in relation to urban policy, the promotion of public-private partnerships by New Labour.

The practice of regeneration is an increasingly multi-sectoral affair, a finding that suggests that explaining the 'business' role in local regeneration purely in terms of profit maximisation is no longer (if, indeed it ever was) sufficient. As much is said by Cox and Mair (1998), and a more detailed revisiting of their theory of local dependence and the spatalised effects of local interest agendas would be a valuable way to take forward explorations of these themes in future research.

8.3. Inter-organisational working and power relations

A central objective of this study was to shed light on the inter-organisation networks involved in matters of local economic development, and to critically assess the policy-making processes that underpin the delivery of regeneration. A related goal was, in exploring these inter-relations, to reflect upon the power dynamics or 'modalities' of power, that mediate the relative influence of various stakeholders in local place-making.

The research has found that local governance is characterised by a complex network of institutions and the onus was on organisations to negotiate or 'earn' a place at the table in relation to policy-making. The local business agenda, represented predominantly by SBEG, was shown to have invested significant efforts in 'instituting' itself into the pre-existing institutional landscape. As several interviewees noted, the South Bank has historically been subject to relatively 'loose' local authority control. Local business and cultural representatives characterised this as disinterest on the part of local government, and community actors tended to agree that local authority leadership in matters of planning, economic development and regeneration had, historically, been weak. Following the receding of regional government control in the late 1980s, a relatively open governance landscape emerged in which community, business, and other interest groups flourished.

While, as Healey (2002) notes, in place-making, no single agent of group has control over local agendas, it was SBEG, and not the more well-established community groups that, in this research, was shown to have the 'strategic capacity' to 'imagine the city'. This did not,

however, stem from some kind of intrinsic institutional 'power', but rather from the group's relatively advantageous position in relation to accessing, and mobilising, the political networks necessary to drive forward the delivery of its members' agenda around the quality of the public realm. In this sense then, the business agenda was shown to be highly contingent upon the (conditional) support of the community, and particularly those with a 'democratic mandate', such as local councillors and MPs, which provided a way through which SBEG legitimated its activities. This reflects the 'realpolitik' of addressing the 'democratic design problems' which afflict special interest groups such as BIDs that are engaged in matters of local governance (Justice and Skelcher, 2009).

Related to this is a research finding that concerns the capacities or 'powers' of the 'business' agenda. As chapter 2 has demonstrated, an assumption that characterises some of the existing business politics literature is that the private sector represents a set of 'elite' interests that exert control over other stakeholders and (re)development agendas. The thesis research suggests that this is not always the case, and, moreover, contends that the power exchanges underpinning inter-institutional working defy easy characterisation. A central claim of the research is that business-led bodies' involvement in consensus-building activities represents, not a *reflection of* their level of control over local politics, but rather *recognition of* the limitations of what the special interest groups such as SBEG can achieve without the support of other local stakeholders.

The contingent nature of the business agenda places the onus on interest-led groups to avoid open confrontation through the controlling of power relations that can impede the effectiveness of 'rational argument'. This, as the research has shown, is a technique used by SBEG, and while, as chapter 7 shows, it also engages in "kicking and screaming" as a way to "get things done", the group recognises that this represents only a limited form of institutional power. Instead, as the authoring of documents such as the *Memorandum of Understanding* evidence, SBEG's preferred way of working is in partnership. This collaborative approach represents a new or different way of working to the aggressive business culture described by Peck and Tickell (1995), and while SBEG is no less results-orientated, the group's influence is exerted more subtly through forums such governance partnerships, something which makes measuring or monitoring the impact of the business agenda much more difficult to quantify.

8.4. The (post) politics of partnership

It is the challenges, covert or overt, that partnership governance arrangements present for the maintenance of democratic politics that authors such as Mouffe (2005) argue are representative of a wider shift towards a 'post-political' style of governing. This research has used such writings to consider the effects of partnership governance arrangements for democratic politics at the local level, and, in turn, aimed to clarify and extend some of the more conceptual arguments made about the constitution, and exercise of, the political.

The research has shown that the adoption of a 'new' consensual politics in matters of planning and regeneration under New Labour, represents a challenge for existing institutional bodies, some of whom have struggled to get to grips with the post-political requirement that governance solutions must be forged through consensual and not through antagonistic means. In the South Bank, this has entailed the overcoming of past conflicts along 'old' battle lines of 'business' vs 'community', a process which has involved the controlling of those members of the population seen to hold outdated, traditional and/or irrational viewpoints and who are viewed as a threat to the forging of consensus.

Some bodies, including SBEG, but also community groups such as WaCoCo, have embraced a collaborative style of working and have thus have gained a place inside of consensual governance arrangements. These organisations have grasped the opportunities that this presents in relation to local strategy-making. The generation and acquisition of inter-institutional trust has been shown to be a key dynamic in local governance, and something that SBEG has invested significant time and effort in fostering. The research has shown that the maintenance of 'rational' argument is an important technique used by business-led groups to become key players in the local regeneration game. SBEG has done this by stressing the practical, pragmatic and eminently *achievable* nature of its agenda. This has also entailed the emphasising of the group's expert knowledge of the local environment (a positioning that was often juxtaposed with that of local authorities) as well as the control of power relations as part of the avoidance of conflictual politics with other stakeholders.

This is one finding that speaks directly to the questions posed in chapter 1 of the thesis about how to demonstrate the existence (or not) of post-political approaches to governing. The restricting of dissensus and disagreement is a key feature of a consensual style of governing that was favoured under New Labour, and which emphasised the mutual

'community' benefits of regeneration. In this research, a more consensual way of working has also been observed, namely through the creation of, ostensibly inclusive, governance frameworks such as the SBP. These bodies have played a central role in the creation and management of consensus and have also overseen the mediation of community participation through non-conflictual forms of engagement such as the South Bank Forum.

Such practices evidence the careful management of community, wherein the goal is to, through the line of least resistance, "get things done". This is a finding that resonates with New Labour's contention that, in the delivery of local services, 'what matters is what works in giving effect to our values'. However, the process of 'getting things done' is far from straightforward, and the research has shown that while a consensual vision of local place has been brokered between local business, councillors and MPs, (select) community or residential representatives and the senior management-level of local authorities, delivering this vision has been subject to a series of complications, including instances of resistance from factions of the community, as evidenced by the Doon Street case. What this demonstrates is that, while local politics might be less open to the kind of 'radical' (though not necessarily 'bottom-up') interventions of the Coin Street days, the *possibility* for genuine politics, that is the reordering of the current 'police order', however remote, remains.

There are currently signs that moment of 'politics proper' may be emergent. Following the revolutionary 'Arab spring', and fuelled by distain for the way global governments' have dealt with the (ongoing) financial crisis, occupations by anti-capitalist protestors are currently underway in locations such as Wall Street in New York, and St Paul's Cathedral in London. These collective movements are what Rancière (1995: 49) refers to as democracy; the 'community of sharing in both sense of the term: membership in a single world which can only be expressed in adversarial terms, and a coming together which can only occur in conflict'.

Moves made by resident groups to challenge planning permission for the Doon Street scheme in the South Bank, are not entirely unrelated to the 'Occupy' movements. While in the South Bank these attempts were unsuccessful, they demonstrate that, although rare, attempts continue to be made to resist the dominant development discourse or 'police order'. This suggests that the collective social groupings that characterised the Coin Street

campaigns of the 1970s and saw 'residents' pitted against 'business', while now eroded by years of partnership working, do still resonate with parts of the South Bank community.

SBEG has been very aware of the potential for continuing conflict along the 'old' frontier lines of 'resident' and 'business', and indeed this awareness underscores the rationale for the formation of bodies such as the SBP. The circumventing of 'combative' elements of the community that were perceived to be, through their questioning of the involvement of a business-led group in local governance, creating a barrier to the delivery of regeneration, evidences the use of post-political tactics in the South Bank. In addition, in extolling the virtues of collaborative working and notions of shared 'needs' and 'benefits', differences between these factions have been softened, though *not* fully ameliorated.

The degree to which collective social groupings, that Rancière suggests are key to the exercise of democratic politics, will remain part of the story of (re)development in the South Bank as its residential population continues to undergo demographic and social change is unclear, and it may be that as the last bastions of the 'old' community described in chapter 4 die out, the insertion of a fully hegemonic development vision, that closes down the spaces for the emergence of genuine politics, will be possible.

8.5. Exceptional cases count: Learning from the South Bank

These examples of the grounded political effects of changes in local governance constitute one of the research's core methodological contributions, and the research has sought, through an in-depth study of the inter-relations that characterise local regeneration in an inner-urban neighbourhood, to develop greater understanding of how the private sector stake in place shaping is negotiated and shapes policy outcomes. As chapter 3 has discussed, the decision to focus on a specific place, the South Bank, was taken, in part because of the reputation this area has been touted as an example of 'best practice' and/or successful partnership-led regeneration.

The research has shown this to be an over-simplification and, while projects such as the Riverside Walkway improvements have been delivered to widespread praise, others, including the Jubilee Gardens redevelopment have become flash-points for tensions around matters such as the handling of community participation and the 'globalisation' of the South Bank's regeneration. What this serves to highlight is that, even in the South Bank,

with its relatively well-established partnership agenda, and vociferous and active business community, delivering agendas such neighbourhood working remains problematic.

This is not something acknowledged by government policy, which appears to assume that, in matters of local (re)development, different interests can be brought together to deliver equal benefits to a range of social groups. While it is sometimes the case that partnership working can deliver a vision of regeneration that appears to appease most elements of a community, as earlier stages of the Jubilee Gardens redevelopment scheme evidence, mutually beneficial solutions are far from the 'norm'. Indeed, it is a contention of the research that regeneration, place-shaping and local (re)development are *always* the subject of competing and/or conflicting interest agendas. To deny this is to risk adopting a post-political viewpoint in which wholly inclusive and harmonious solutions are seen as both possible and, moreover, desirable.

As pointed out in the research, identifying a tipping point or form of measurement through which the post-political nature of practices can be assessed may be an impossible task. Instead, developing a detailed understanding of the localised set of power relations at work in matters of local redevelopment is needed in order to make the subtleties described in the three 'delivery' case studies in chapter 7 visible. As Flyvbjerg (1998) has suggested, the focus of social research should therefore not be what *should be done*, but rather, what is *actually done*.

One way to develop this kind of research and connect it, as Flyvbjerg (1998) does, to broader questions such as the practice of democractic politics, is to facilitate a greater level of inter-change between studies of *policy* or the 'police order', and the *political*. As this research has shown, much of the literature concerned with the constitution and preservation of the latter remains abstract in nature, and yet, shedding critical empirical light on the local, spatialised practices that flow from policy, and which in turn, (re)define and restrict the parameters of the *political*, is one way in which the emergence of post-political approaches to governing can be identified, and, moreover, resisted.

Rancière (2009: 288) suggests as much as he acknowledges that rarely (if ever) can we say, 'this is politics in its purity. But we ceaselessly face situations when we have to discern how politics encroaches on matters of the police and police on matters of politics'. It is therefore

crucial, he argues, that we understand the 'intertwinement' of politics and the police (policy) order, a contention that closely reflects the epistemological approach adopted in this research. Ranciere's (2009: 288) reflections are part of what he calls the 'method of equality' and which outlines his belief that 'concepts are neither Platonic ideals nor empirical designations'.

Instead, for Ranciere (2009), concepts such as 'police' and 'politics' should be used a 'tools with which we can draw a new topography in order to account for what happens to us and with which we can try to weave a new mode of investigation and action equally distant from the consent of things as they are and from the hyperboles of imaginary radicalism'. Ranciere's call for the forging of a methodological approach in which we can be critical and resistant towards the ways things are, but yet also grounded in our imagining of how things might be bettered, represents an agenda for further research that is outlined further in 8.6.

This research, in adopting an intensive and locally-grounded approach, also demonstrates the value of case study research, and a methodological contribution of the thesis is to show how and why 'exceptional cases count'. While the South Bank case necessarily represents a unique arrangement of social, political, cultural, environmental and historical elements, key features of the approaches to redevelopment adopted here are also evidenced elsewhere. Thus, the complex institutional landscape described in chapters 5 and 6, while unique in its composition, represents a wider shift towards more pluralised sets of 'networked' governance arrangements that, increasingly, characterise the management of urban space.

Similarly, SBEG, while an independent business-led partnership body that has, in part due to its local dependence, no direct comparator, bears many of the hallmarks of recently developed government-led, institutional forms, namely BIDS. Reflecting on SBEG's activities, as well as its organisational capacities (and the limitations to these), may indicate what BIDs, a relatively new governance body in the UK, might become. Indeed, the research suggests that, even if BIDs remain focussed on stock activities around the 'safe, green and clean' agenda, their impact on the organisation and management of urban space remains of significant research interest.

Other, methodological contributions of the research have involved extending awareness of, and reflections upon, the conducting of inter-institutional, or to use New Labour's

terminology, 'collaborative' research. Collaborative research is likely to become more common as governments past and present continue to press home the benefits of partnership in producing 'policy relevant' research that can extend the evidence base on matters such as regeneration. Such ambitions, in more closely linking the worlds of academia and practitioners, suggest that there is scope for academic research to further influence and shape policy agendas. In relation to this research, bringing attention to the failures or limitations of partnership working, and, moreover instances (and absences of) *politics* is a worthwhile endeavour, particularly given the uncritical, and seemingly relentless, promotion of partnership by government. This includes the current Coalition government, whose emergent approach to urban policy forms part of the focus of the following section.

8.6. Towards an agenda for future research

New Labour prioritised local-scale urban regeneration during its 13 years of government and, as Brenner and Theodore (2002: 341) note, 'localities and are now back on the agenda across the political spectrum.' The Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition government, elected in 2010, have also pronounced their support for localism and, as Prime Minister David Cameron (2010a: 2) recently declared, 'localism holds the key to economic, social and political success in the future'. For Cameron (2010a: 2), incentivising local authorities and businesses to work together to foster growth will build a strong, resilient and balanced economy in the wake of the global financial crisis, while handing local people more power and control over the services that are delivered in their areas will 'inspire a new spirit of civic pride in our communities'.

Such values are core to the Conservative Party's 'Big Society' agenda. Described, by Cameron (2010b: no page), as representing a 'huge culture change', the Big Society is envisaged as,

> [W]here people, in their everyday lives, in their homes, in their neighbourhoods, in their workplace, don't always turn to officials, local authorities or central government for answers to the problems they face, but instead feel both free and powerful enough to help themselves and their own communities…It's about liberation –the biggest, most dramatic redistribution of power from elites in Whitehall to the man and woman on the street.

Cameron's endorsement of local political devolution is hardly without political precedent. As chapters 1 and 2 have shown, the previous Labour government was outwardly

committed to the values of the New Localism, although its delivery record on these agendas has been criticised (Jessop, undated, Morgan, 2007, Peck, 2000, Pike and Tomaney, 2009). Cameron's moralisation of regeneration shares parallels with New Labour's 'behaviour change agenda', which, in its characterisation of the 'enabling state' saw some responsibilities for welfare transferred to the individual or community level.

Indeed, there are signs that, under the Coalition government, these agendas may be taken further still. Jones et al (2011) describe how 'soft' or 'liberal' paternalism has formed a new rationality of government in which new registers of legitimate government activities are being forged. Much like those who emphasise the new frontiers of the 'regulatory state', Jones et al (2010) suggest that this does not entail the receding of state intervention, but rather sees the business of governing conducted through new mechanisms and by different agents. This includes, as a Foucauldian perspective on governance would suggest, individual citizens who become engaged in the practice of the governing of the self.

In emphasising the potential of the Big Society to fix 'broken Britain', a distinction is made between the 'ideal' and 'irrational' (or irresponsible) citizen, a process that shares parallels with the post-political categorising of people along the moral lines of 'good' or 'bad'. The emergent urban agenda, with its emphasis on the 'transfer [of power] down to individuals and communities' appears to revolve around the removal of government (Pickles, 2010a: no page). Yet, new strategies of government around behaviour change and choice actually represent a set of highly structured agendas that have already attracted criticism from those concerned with the democratic legitimacy and ethical dimensions of such policy measures (see Jones et al, 2011).

As under New Labour, business groups are envisaged as playing a central role in devolved forms of governance, and, in the Coalition government's proposed *Local Enterprise Partnerships* (LEPs), businesses are being called upon to 'provide the strategic leadership in their areas to set out local economic priorities' and, in partnership with local authorities, establish the 'right conditions for growth in their area' (HM Government, 2010: 2). The boundaries of LEP's operational responsibilities are unclear, perhaps not surprisingly, given Pickles's insistence that this should be for LEP members' themselves to decide. As he commented, when asked: '"What are the real guidelines?" "It's up to you. Be as ambitious

as you can. Be as radical as you like. I'm not going to stand in anyone's way."' (Telegraph, 2011).

Such statements indicate that the government's approach to urban redevelopment is one that revolves around the removal of barriers to more localised forms of governance. Yet the realities of local partnership working revealed in this research suggests that giving local businesses a blank page from which to craft local development agendas will create a series of questions around accountability, legitimacy and consent, that, thus far, do not appear to have been considered by the Coalition government. There also appears to be little consideration of the barriers to neighbourhood partnership working that were shown to exist even in a place such as the South Bank with a relatively well-established and well-resourced non-governmental sector.

Indeed, the challenges around the delivery of neighbourhood renewal are arguably even greater today, and, following the worldwide credit crisis of late 2008, the state of UK finances remain perilous. The Coalition government's budget reduction measures have seen the public purse strings drastically tightened, with a new 'era of austerity' declared. With local authorities facing budget cuts of between 15-20% across the board and more in 'non-priority' or 'non-essential' services, urban regeneration occupies a particularly precarious position.

For some, the Coalition's promotion of localism represents little more than a handing over of the responsibility for the making of cuts, while pronouncements of 'greater autonomy' for local citizens in place-shaping appear to have little in the way of funds attached. Similar sentiments were expressed by participants in this research with local authority figures in particular expressing scepticism that 'devolved local powers' would mean that responsibility for rising jobless figures would simply be shifted over to become a 'local government problem'. The lack of funding attached to the localism agenda is acknowledged by the Minister for Decentralisation, Greg Clarke, who in a recent (2010) speech said,

> As a Treasury minister in the former government recently made clear, there is no money left. What central government does have plenty of, though, is power - and it is power, rather than money, that will be the main currency of redistribution for a long time to come.

Whether this 'power' will, for local actors, materialise, and what it will mean for local democracy remains to be seen. However, for business actors, public sector cuts combined

with the Coalition's enthusiasm for local working may present opportunities, not least through new governance models such as Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs), which will assume wide-ranging powers for planning, housing, transport and infrastructure, employment and enterprise and business start-ups.

It is for this reason that further research into the role of business-led groups in local governance is needed. If LEPs assume responsibility for even some of these processes, local environs will see a rolling out of the business agenda of the scale and scope not seen since the Thatcher years. While there have already been suggestions that the LEPs' presence in regeneration will be tempered due to a lack of funds, the task for research must surely be to cast a critical eye over the implementation of such programmes, as part of a broader methodological commitment to the study of the interchanges between the police order and the *political*, part of what Rancière (2009) calls, the 'method of equality'.

It is only by enhancing our understanding of this inter-connected dynamic, through the study of the spatialised effects of agendas such as *Sustainable Community Building* or the *Big Society,* that we can reflect upon the status of, and thus seek to *protect*, democracy.

Appendices

Appendix 1. Meetings observed

Meeting date	Description	Location
6 December 2007	South Bank Forum	Coin Street Neighbourhood Centre
29 April 2008	Central London BIDs meeting and dinner	SBEG's offices, Waterloo restaurant
16 April 2008	Neighbourhood Working Delivery Group	London Borough of Lambeth Town Hall
4 March 2008	SBEG Board meeting	Shell Tower
15 January 2009	Economic Development Partnership Board	London Borough of Lambeth Town Hall
26 January 2009	Sports Action Zone meeting	SBEG's offices
27 January 2009	South Bank Partnership meeting	St Thomas's and Guy's Hospital
27 January 2009	Waterloo Steering Group	Network Rail
27 January 2009	Creative Place and Spaces meeting	South Bank Centre
28 January 2009	Private meeting between SBEG and London Borough of Lambeth representative	SBEG's offices
28 January 2009	Worklessness Delivery Group	London Borough of Lambeth Town Hall
5 February 2009	Waterloo City Square public consultation	Coin Street Neighbourhood Centre
18 February 2009	SBEG Board meeting	South Bank Centre
5 March 2009	South Bank Forum	Coin Street Neighbourhood Centre
11 March 2009	Worklessness Delivery Group	London Borough of Lambeth Town Hall

13 March 2009	Local neighbourhood service agreements – initial scoping meeting	London Borough of Lambeth Town Hall
11 March 2009	WCDG meeting	Waterloo Action Centre
8 June 2009	Lambeth Cabinet meeting	London Borough of Lambeth Town Hall
15 -16 June 2009	Doon Street Judicial Review	Royal Courts of Justice
18 June 2009	Economic Development Partnership Board	London Borough of Lambeth Town Hall
18 June 2009	South Bank Forum	Coin Street Neighbourhood Centre
3 September 2009	Lambeth First Board Meeting	London Borough of Lambeth Town Hall
15 September 2009	SBEG Board meeting	South Bank Centre
16 September 2009	Enterprise Board meeting	London Borough of Lambeth Town Hall
8 October 2009	South Bank Forum	Coin Street Neighbourhood Centre
20 October 2009	South Bank Partnership meeting	Coin Street Neighbourhood Centre
21 October 2009	WCDG meeting	Waterloo Action Centre
30 November 2009	SBEG Board meeting	South Bank Centre
9 March 2010	South Bank Partnership meeting	Coin Street Neighbourhood Centre
28 April 2010	WCDG meeting	Waterloo Action Centre
22 June 2010	South Bank Partnership meeting	Coin Street Neighbourhood Centre

Appendix 2. Completed interviews by institutional category

Institutional category	Organisation represented	Date
SBEG members	Coin Street Community Builders (CSCB)	08.09.08
SBEG members	South Bank Centre (SBC)	20.10.08
SBEG members	P&O Estates	20.10.08
SBEG members	King's College London (KCL)	29.10.08
SBEG members	St Thomas's and Guy's Charity	03.11.08
SBEG members	King's College London (KCL)	03.11.08
SBEG members	London Development Authority (LDA)	11.11.08
SBEG members	IBM	12.11.08
SBEG members	Shell	20.11.08
SBEG members	London South Bank University (LSBU)	27.11.08
SBEG members	Network Rail	19.01.09
SBEG members	National Theatre	30.01.09
SBEG members	Ernst and Young (telephone interview)	02.02.09
SBEG members	British Film Institute (BFI)	04.02.09
SBEG members	British Film Institute (BFI)	10.02.09
SBEG members	Merlin Group/London Eye	26.02.09
SBEG members	St Thomas's and Guys Foundation Trust	26.03.09
SBEG members	St Thomas's and Guys Foundation Trust	13.08.09
SBEG members	Park Plaza	09.10.09

Community/resident groups (Residents' associations, community planning and umbrella groups)	Waterloo Community Coalition (WaCoCo)	24.02.09
Community/resident groups	Waterloo Community Development Group (WCDG)	17.03.09
Community/resident groups	Association of Waterloo Groups (AWG)	25.03.09
Community/resident groups	Blackfriar's Settlement/Waterloo Action Centre (WAC)	25.03.09
Community/resident groups	Octavia Hill Residents' Association	16.10.09
Business organisations (Business representative bodies)	Waterloo Quarter Business Alliance	10.03.09
Business organisations	Better Bankside	23.06.09
Business organisations	London First	05.05.09
Business organisations	London Chamber of Commerce	06.05.09
Governmental organisations (Local, central, ward councillors, quangos)	London Borough of Southwark (Regeneration)	09.06.09
Governmental organisations	London Borough of Lambeth (Regeneration)	17.06.09
Governmental organisations	London Borough of Lambeth/Cross River Partnership	22.06.09
Governmental organisations	London Borough of Lambeth (Business and Enterprise)	09.07.09
Governmental organisations	Bishop's Ward Councillor	24.06.09
Governmental organisations	Bishop's Ward Councillor	15.05.09
Governmental organisations	Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG)	05.06.09

Governmental organisations	London Borough of Lambeth (Regeneration)	07.09.09
Governmental organisations	Lambeth First (LSP)	14.05.09
Governmental organisations	Greater London Authority (GLA)	15.05.09
Governmental organisations	London Councils	15.05.09
Governmental organisations	London Borough of Lambeth (Planning)	13.10.09
SBEG staff	Previous chairman – SBEG	23.10.09
SBEG staff	Security manager – SBEG	23.10.09
SBEG staff	CEO – SBEG	27.10.09
SBEG staff	Operations Director – SBEG	10.11.09
SBEG staff	Marketing Director – SBEG	12.11.09
Small-medium sized local businesses	Ian Allen Book and Model Shop	19.09.09
Small-medium sized local businesses	Walrus Social (bar)	02.09.09
Small-medium sized local businesses	Waterloo Body Shop (holistic healthcare)	08.09.09
Small-medium sized local businesses	Pendleton Associates (solicitors)	08.09.09
Small-medium sized local businesses	First Protocol (PR)	29.09.09
Others/miscellaneous	Price Waterhouse Coopers (policy and government division)	02.09.08
Others/miscellaneous	Neighbourhood-working consultant	03.09.08
Total number of interviews = 52		

Appendix 3. Interview schedule: SBEG Board Members

Introduction

My name is Emma Street and I'm a PhD student based in the Department of Geography at King's College London. This research is concerned with developing understanding of the private sector role in sustainable community building with a particular focus on the South Bank area.

About you

1. Can you briefly outline what your job entails?

2. Can you tell me a little about the company you work for [why it exists, its history, its priorities etc]?

3. Can you tell me a little about your background [how did you come to work here]?

SBEG membership

4. When did your company join SBEG?

5. Why did your company decide to join SBEG?

6. As a company, what does your involvement with SBEG consist of?

7. What does membership of SBEG mean for your company?

8. What processes do board members go through to decide on SBEG's priorities for the South Bank?

9. Is this generally an easy process?

10. Can you tell me about how are potential SBEG members are chosen?

11. What do you think SBEG contributes to the South Bank?

12. Who is SBEG accountable to and how?

13. If SBEG hadn't been formed, do you think the South Bank would be different today? If yes, how?

Regeneration and the South Bank

14. How important is the quality of the local environment for your company?

15. In what ways do you think the South Bank area changed in recent years?

16. Can you give me some examples of how these changes might have been positive?

17. And negative?

18. What do you think are the priorities for regeneration in the South Bank?

19. What do you think are the main barriers to regenerating the South Bank?

20. Who are the main players involved in the South Bank's regeneration?

21. Do you think a clear vision for the future of the South Bank exists?

22. If yes, who do you see as key in developing this vision?

23. And implementing it?

24. What do you see the South Bank's identity in relation to the broader London context as being?

Representing business views

25. Why is it important to have 'business voice' within London?

26. To what extent do you think this exists?

27. In your opinion, what organisations best represent business interests in London?

28. What are the key issues for businesses in London currently?

29. And on the South Bank?

30. And for your company?

31. To what extent do you think policymakers understand these issues?

32. To what extent do you think policymakers take action on these issues?

33. Is London a good place to do business? Why? Why not?

34. Is the South Bank a good place to do business? Why? Why not?

35. Is it becoming a better place for businesses? Why? Why not?

The role of businesses in SCB and regeneration

36. What do you understand by the term SCB?

37. What do you think are the priorities in building SCs?

38. What barriers are there to building SCs?

39. Why is it important for businesses to support local communities?

40. Can you give me some examples of how you work with the local community on the South Bank?

41. In what ways do you think businesses should get involved in SCB/regeneration?

42. What barriers are there to businesses getting involved in SCB/regeneration?

43. Are the government's reforms likely to help or hinder businesses on the South Bank?

44. Can you give me some examples of how your company gets involved in SCB/regeneration?

45. Does your company have a corporate social responsibility policy?

46. If so, can you give me some examples of how this policy operates on the ground?

47. Is the current economic slowdown likely to affect business involvement in community regeneration? How?

Appendix 4. Interview schedule: Community and residents' organisations

My name is Emma Street and I'm a PhD student based in the Department of Geography at King's College London. This research is concerned with developing understanding of the private sector role in sustainable community building with a particular focus on the South Bank area.

About you

1. Can you briefly outline what your job entails?

2. When did you get involved in the organisation, and why [background]?

3. What are the main aims of the organisation you work for?

4. What are the origins of the organisation [why was it established]?

5. What are your main sources of funding?

6. How many people does the organisation employ?

7. Whose interests does your organisation represent?

8. Can you give me some examples of how you represent these interests in your work?

9. Who are the other bodies/organisations do you most frequently work with?

10. Can you give me some examples of how you work with them to achieve your priorities?

11. Can you give me some examples of main challenges you face as an organisation in achieving your aims?

Regeneration and the South Bank

11. How has the South Bank area changed in recent years?

12. What has this meant for the work that your organisation does?

13. Can you give me some examples of how is your organisation currently involved in regeneration of the South Bank?

14. What do you see as the priorities for regeneration in the South Bank?

15. Have these changed in recent years?

16. If so, how have they changed?

17. If so, why do you think this is?

18. Do you have a sense that certain interests dominate regeneration of the South Bank?

19. If so, whose interests dominate, and in what ways?

20. What do you see as the main challenges in regenerating the South Bank?

21. Have these changed in recent years? How?

22. Who are the main players involved in the South Bank's regeneration?

Sustainable community building

23. What do you understand by the term SCB?

24. What do you think the priorities in building sustainable communities should be?

25. What do you think the priorities in building sustainable communities are in reality?

26. Can you give me some examples of the easy your organisation is working towards SCs?

27. What do you think are the main barriers in achieving SCs?

28. What do you think are the main priorities in achieving SCs in London?

29. What do you think are the main barriers to achieving SCs in London?

30. What do you think are the main priorities in achieving SCs on the South Bank?

31. What do you think are the main barriers in achieving SCs on the South Bank?

32. Do you think the sustainable communities agenda has made a positive difference to your work?

33. Do you think the sustainable communities agenda has made a positive difference to local communities on the South Bank?

34. How are local communities involved in the regeneration of the South Bank?

35. Do you think a clear vision for the future of the South Bank exists?

36. If so, who do you think are the key players in establishing this?

37. And in implementing it?

38. Do you think this vision represents the best interests of the South Bank community?

The role of the private sector in SCB

39. Can you give me some examples of how you work with private sector bodies in your work?

40. Do you work with SBEG?

41. What do you think of the work they do?

42. How would you characterise them? [Business, charity etc].

42. Do you think they are an influential organisation on the South Bank?

43. Some people might say that the private sector should not be involved in SCB. Do you agree with this point of view?

44. If no, in what ways do you think the private sector should contribute towards SCB?

45. If yes, why do you think this?

Appendix 5. Interview schedule: Government organisations

Introduction

My name is Emma Street and I'm a PhD student based in the Department of Geography at King's College London. This research is concerned with developing understanding of the private sector role in sustainable community building with a particular focus on the South Bank area.

About you

1. Can you briefly outline what your job entails?

2. When did you get involved in the organisation, and why [background]?

3. What are the main priorities of your department?

Sustainable community building and regeneration

4. What does the term SCB mean to you?

5. Can you give me some examples of the ways you work towards building sustainable communities?

6. What do you think the priorities in building sustainable communities are?

7. What do you think the barriers to achieving sustainable communities are?

8. What are the main priorities in achieving SCs in Lambeth/Southwark/South Bank?

9. What are the main barriers to achieving SCs in Lambeth/Southwark/South Bank?

10. How is Lambeth/Southwark/the South Bank working incorporating ideas of SCB in development strategies for the borough/area?

11. Do you have a sense that certain interests dominate regeneration of the Lambeth/Southwark/South Bank?

12. What do you see as the main challenges in regenerating Lambeth/Southwark/South Bank?

13. Have these changed in recent years? How?

14. Who are the main players involved in regeneration in Lambeth/Southwark/South Bank?

15. How are local communities involved in regeneration in Lambeth/Southwark/on the South Bank?

Visions for development

16. Do you think an agreed upon agenda/vision for Lambeth/Southwark/South Bank's future development exists?

17. If so, what do you consider its priorities to be?

18. What was the process through which this agenda/vision was developed?

19. Do you think this agenda/vision meets the needs of Lambeth/Southwark/South Bank community?

20. How does this agenda/vision fit within the wider London context?

21. How does this agenda/vision relate to the Government's regeneration agenda?

The role of the private sector in regeneration

22. Some people might say that the private sector should not be involved in SCB. Do you agree with this point of view?

23. If no, in what ways do you think the private sector should contribute towards SCB?

24. If yes, why do you think the private sector should not be involved in SCB?

25. Do you work with the private sector in your department?

26. If so, how do you work with them?

27. Do you think the private sector have different priorities to the public sector in relation to SCB and regeneration?

28. If so, in what ways do you think their priorities differ?

29. Do you work with SBEG?

30. What is your opinion of the work they do?

32. How would you characterise them? [Business, charity etc].

33. Do you think they are an influential organisation on the South Bank?

Appendix 6. Interview schedule: SBEG staff

Introduction

My name is Emma Street and I'm a PhD student based in the Department of Geography at King's College London. This research is concerned with developing understanding of the private sector role in sustainable community building with a particular focus on the South Bank area.

Working at SBEG

1. Can you tell me a little about your role at SBEG, and what it entails?

2. What do you understand SBEG's main priorities and aims to be?

3. How successful do you think SBEG is at achieving these?

4. What do you think SBEG's main priorities and aims should be?

5. Do you think these have changed from when SBEG was established?

6. Whose interests do you think SBEG represents?

7. What type of organisation to consider SBEG to be? (Charity/business/lobbying etc)

8. What do you think SBEG contributes to the South Bank?

9. What organisations does SBEG work with?

10. How does SBEG work with other organisations in its work?

11. What do you think other people think of SBEG?

12. Do you think they view it as a professional organisation?

13. Do you think SBEG is a sustainable organisation?

14. How important is raising SBEG's profile in relation to ensuring future funding?

15. What are SBEGs priorities for its future development?

SCB and SBEG

16. What do you understand the by the term SCB?

17. What do you see as the priorities in building SCs?

18. Do you think the SCB agenda has had a positive impact upon SBEG's activities?

19. Can the SCB agenda be considered a success?

20. Can you give me some examples of how you think SBEG's work contributes to SCB?

21. What organisations does SBEG work with in relation to SCB?

22. How does SBEG work with them?

23. What do you think the main challenges in achieving SCs are?

24. How are local communities involved in regeneration on the South Bank?

25. Do you think if SBEG hadn't been established, the South Bank would be different? How?

The South Bank

26. What do you think the main priorities for the South Bank are?

27. Have these changed in recent years?

28. If so, in what ways have they changed?

29. What do you think SBEG's role is in achieving these priorities?

30. Do you think a clear agenda for the future development of the South Bank exists?

31. If so, what does this agenda consist of?

32. Who do you see as the key actors in developing this agenda?

33. Who do you see as the key actors in implementing this agenda?

34. What do you see as the South Bank's role in relation to the rest of London?

35. What role do you think the heritage movement will have upon the development of the South Bank in the coming years?

36. What role do you think current economic slowdown will have upon the development of the South Bank in the coming years?

37. What role do you think possibility of a change of government will have upon the development of the South Bank in the coming years?

Appendix 7. Interview schedule: Small and Medium Sized Businesses

Introduction

My name is Emma Street and I'm a PhD student based in the Department of Geography at King's College London. This research is concerned with developing understanding of the private sector role in sustainable community building with a particular focus on the South Bank area.

About you

1. What type of business do you run?

2. How many staff do you employ?

3. How long have you been based here?

4. Are you the owner of the premises? If not, who do you rent from?

5. Is the cost of renting your business an issue for you? Has the rental situation changed in recent years? In what ways?

6. What type of people make up the majority of your customers?

7. Do you see yourself as an independent business? (I.e. non-chain) Do you think this should be preserved? If so, how?

8. Would you like to see more visitors coming to this area?

9. What would that mean for independent retailers/businesses?

Development in Waterloo

10. Do you identify yourself with the Waterloo or South Bank community? Are they the same thing? How do they differ?

11. How do you feel the area has changed in recent years? (Last 10-15 years)

12. Have those changes had a positive or negative effect on your business?

13. Do you feel you have enough of a say in the way the area is being developed? If not, why not?

14. How do you think development in Waterloo has compared to the South Bank?

15. Are you concerned about the impact future developments may have upon rentals?

16. Have you been consulted about the plans to regenerate Lower Marsh?

17. What do you think about the proposals?

18. Will they improve things for businesses in the area?

19. If not, what would you like to see the plans do?

20. Is the South Bank/Waterloo area a sustainable community?

21. If yes, why? If not, why not, what would make it sustainable?

The business voice and representation

22. Has being part of Waterloo Quarter improved things for businesses in the area? If so, in what ways?

23. Do you think the local authorities listen to small business owners?

24. Do you think the Mayor's office and central government listen?

25. What more could authorities do to make life easier for small businesses?

26. Are you aware of South Bank Employer's Group?

27. What do you think of the work that they do?

28. Do you think they represent businesses in the South Bank and Waterloo area?

29. Do you think small, medium and large businesses have different priorities/face different problems? If so, how do they differ?

30. Do you think it's important for businesses to engage with communities/regeneration?

Effects of the recession

31. What effect is the recession having upon your business? How is it affecting the wider South bank/Waterloo area?

32. Are the authorities doing enough to support you?

33. What would make your business more sustainable?

Appendix 8. Interview recruitment letter

Dear,

I am writing to invite you to participate in an Economic and Social Science Research Council (ESRC) CASE studentship project, 'New Planning for New Times? Sustainable Community Building in London'. The project aims to investigate practices of sustainable community building in London, with a particular focus on the ways that private, public and community sectors work together to achieve sustainable communities.

The interviews will take the form of an informal conversation and will last no longer than 1 hour. Interviews will be recorded, and transcribed, with your permission. Interview participants will not be identified by name, and care will be taken to ensure individuals will not be identifiable by their institutional/company affiliation. An information sheet and consent form will be provided at the interview if you decide to take part.

I will phone you in a few days time to see whether or not it will be possible to arrange a date and time to meet. Please feel free to contact me with any questions at King's College London (see details below).

Yours sincerely,

Emma Street

Postgraduate Research Student

Tel: 0207 848 1656

Email: emma.street@kcl.ac.uk

Appendix 9. Information sheet and consent form

REC Protocol Number: REP(GGS)/07/08-142

YOU WILL BE GIVEN A COPY OF THIS INFORMATION SHEET

New planning for new times? Sustainable community building in London

I would like to invite you to participate in this postgraduate research project. You should only participate if you want to; choosing not to take part will not disadvantage you in any way. Before you decide whether you want to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what your participation will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information.

The research aims to further understanding of practices of sustainable community building in London

As part of the research, I will be speaking with representatives from private and public sector organisations about how they are involved in sustainable community building

If you agree to take part in the research, an interview, lasting no longer than 1 hour, will be conducted at a location convenient to you

If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form

No names will be used, and care will be taken to ensure individuals will not be identifiable by institutional/company affiliation

You may withdraw your data from the project at any time up until the start of the writing-up of the research in April 2010

Recordings of interviews will be wiped upon transcription. Transcripts will be given a unique code (stored separately from names), and stored securely, accessible only by the researcher

There are no risks associated with taking part in this research

A final copy of the research will be available on request

If you have any questions about the research, please contact: Emma Street, Department of Geography, King's College London, Strand, WC2R 2LS. Email: emma.street@kcl.ac.uk.

It is up to you to decide whether to take part or not. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

If this study has harmed you in any way you can contact King's College London using the details below for further advice and information: Professor Rob Imrie, Department of Geography, King's College London, Strand, WC2R 2LS. Tel: 0207 848 2487

Please complete this form after you have read the Information Sheet and/or listened to an explanation about the research.

Title of Study: New planning for new times? Sustainable community building in London

King's College Research Ethics Committee Ref: REP(GGS)/07/08-142

Thank you for considering to take part in this research. The person organizing the research must explain the project to you before you agree to take part.

If you have any questions arising from the Information Sheet or explanation already given to you, please ask the researcher before you decide whether to join in. You will be given a copy of this Consent Form to keep and refer to at any time.

I understand that if I decide at any other time during the research that I no longer wish to participate in this project, I can notify the researchers involved and be withdrawn from it immediately.

I consent to the processing of my personal information for the purposes of this research study. I understand that such information will be treated as strictly confidential and handled in accordance with the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998.

Participant's Statement:

I _____

agree that the research project named above has been explained to me to my satisfaction and I agree to take part in the study. I have read both the notes written above and the Information Sheet about the project, and understand what the research study involves.

Researcher's Statement:

I_____

Confirm that I have carefully explained the nature, demands and foreseeable risks (where applicable) of the proposed research to the volunteer.

Signed_____ **Date**_____

Appendix 10. Memorandum of understanding for CASE studentship

Introduction

This MoU sets out the arrangements for carrying out the CASE research project entitled New Planning for New Times: Sustainable Community-Building in London. The MoU is subsidiary to the ESRC's CASE studentship award criteria. It sets out the institutions and lead investigators involved and the financial and management arrangements.

THIS MoU is dated the [ ] day of [ ] BETWEEN King's College London and its successors in title and South Bank Employers Group (hereinafter referred to as "the parties").

Agreement period

This MoU shall commence on the October 2008 (the "Commencement Date") and shall continue in force until September 2010 unless terminated earlier by default or mutual consent.

Institutions, investigators and tasks

Institutions	Principal Investigators	Tasks
King's College London	Ms. Emma Street,	Student
	Professor Rob Imrie and Dr M Raco	Principal supervisor, second supervisor
South Bank Employers Group	[Names removed]	Third supervisor and lead contact

Integration and management arrangements

King's College London will be responsible for:

Thesis submission

Relevant research training for the student,

Academic supervision and monitoring of progress.

SBEG will be responsible for:

Supporting the student's research logistically, providing the student with access to the organisation, including a period of secondment (30 days per year, October 2008 to September 2010)

Joint review group

Strategic oversight will be by a Steering Group consisting of the student, Professor Imrie and Dr Raco (KCL), and [names removed] (SBEG). It is anticipated that the Group meets every 3 months for the duration of the project, for which the student will provide a progress report.

Publications and intellectual copyright

Ownership and IPR

The Parties hereby agree that any and all Foreground IPR (including but not limited to copyright, patents, trademarks, design rights and know-how) shall belong to the College. Each party shall, subject to third party obligations, make available to the other and to the Student any of its Background IPR that is necessary for the research to be carried out. The ownership of Background IPR shall not be affected by this Agreement.

Licences to foreground IPR

The College hereby grants a non-exclusive licence to South Bank Employers Group to use or copy Foreground IPR to conduct non-commercial research for its own purposes, subject to maintaining any obligations of confidentiality regarding the College's Confidential Information (as defined elsewhere in this Agreement).

Credit

South Bank Employers Group agree to acknowledge the contribution as appropriate of the Student, the ESRC and/or the College or its employees to any publications it makes concerning the Project, and the College agrees to acknowledge the contribution as appropriate of South Bank Employers Group. However, neither party shall use shall use the other's name, crest, logo, trademark or registered image, or the name of any of its staff or students without the express written permission of that party or individual.

Confidentiality and publicity

Notwithstanding either King's College London or South Bank Employers Groups legal obligations under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 each of the parties hereto undertakes to the other to keep confidential, and not to divulge to any person without the prior written consent of the other party all information (written or oral) concerning the business affairs of the other that it shall have obtained or received as a result of the discussions leading up to or the entering into and the performance of this MOU. This obligation shall survive the termination or lapse of the provision of the MOU,

Both parties shall ensure that where the project is publicised it emphasises the benefit and opportunities offered by the project and partnership working. Any publicity arranged by either King's College London or South Bank Employers Groups must include recognition of the ESRC.

Variation

The parties following joint review, discussion and agreement reserve the right to vary the project within the agreed remit. Written notice of variation to the project shall be issued by King's College London giving full details of the variation of the project

Notices

Any notice to be given under this MoU shall be in writing and delivered to the agreed address or such other address as may previously been notified to the other party in writing and shall be deemed to be delivered 48 hours after posting.

Signatures:

Department of Geography, King's College London

……

South Bank Employers Group

……

Appendix 11. List of SBEG member organisations

SBEG members[26]	Type of organisation
British Film Institute	Established in 1933, the BFI promotes understanding and appreciation of film and television heritage and culture. The BFI's Southbank centre screens films, while the BFI IMAX has the largest cinema screen in the UK. It plans to build a new film centre on the Hungerford Car Park site, currently owned by the South Bank Centre.
Coin Street Community Builders	A founder member of SBEG, CSCB are a social enterprise and not-for-profit developers, responsible for establishing the Coin Street housing cooperatives, are behind the proposed Doon Street tower.
Ernst & Young	Global corporation that provides assurance, tax, transaction and advisory services. The groups London headquarters are located on the South Bank at 1 Lambeth Palace Rd, and at 1 More London Place, Bankside.
Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust	A founder member of SBEG, the Trust operates St Thomas's Hospital on Westminster Bridge Road, and Guy's Hospital near London Bridge, Southwark. Together, the two hospitals employ around 11,000 staff.
Guy's and St Thomas' Charity	Charity overseeing the award of grants to facilitate improvements to health services in the London boroughs of Lambeth and Southwark. Owns a parcel of land spanning from Westminster Bridge Road to Archbishop's Park
IBM UK	A founder member of SBEG, IBM is a multi-national computer, technology and consulting corporation. IBM occupy a Denis Lasdun designed building on the South Bank riverfront that was purpose built in 1983 for the firm. IBM has since sold the building but continues to lease it. On average, 1700 IBM staff are based at the building each day.
ITV	London Weekend Television, now part of the ITV brand, was a founder member of SBEG. ITV is the UK's largest commercial broadcasting company. Its London studios, built in 1972 as the home of LWT, occupy a South Bank riverfront building which currently houses between 1500-2000 staff.
King's College London	Part of the university of London, King's has two campuses and owns student accommodation in and around the South Bank. The Waterloo campus is in the vicinity of the station, while the Strand campus is to the north of the Thames.
London Development Agency	Part of the Greater London Authority, the LDA is responsible for London's sustainable economic growth. The LDA occupies offices on Blackfriars Road in Southwark, on the eastern edge of the South Bank.
Whitbread	The UK's largest hotel and restaurant company, one of its brands, Premier Inn, operates a hotel within County Hall, located on the South Bank riverside.
Park Plaza Hotels	Operates 1000-bed hotel, the Park Plaza Westminster, on Westminster Bridge Road, the Park Plaza Riverbank to the south of Lambeth Palace and the Park Plaza County Hall.

[26] During the writing-up period (from September 2009-October 2011), the British Rail Board (Residuary) Ltd (BRB) joined SBEG, while IBM left the group. BRB are the current owners of Waterloo International station, which housed the Eurostar train terminal before it relocated to St Pancras station in 2007. The organisation plays an important role in plans to regenerate Waterloo station.

The London Eye Company	Part of the UK visitor attractions company Merlin Entertainments Group, which acquired ownership of the London Eye in 2007, following a takeover of the Tussauds Group. Merlin's Divisional Director of London Midway Attractions, David Sharpe, became Chairman of SBEG in 2009. Offices based in Elizabeth House, York Road.
London South Bank University	Has campuses and student accommodation located in the Elephant and Castle, to the south of Waterloo.
Network Rail	Not-for-dividend company responsible for the running and maintenance of the UK's railway network. Leading on plans to redevelop Waterloo Station.
P&O Developments	Property development, asset management and property management company. Owns Elizabeth House, an office building on York Road, adjacent to Waterloo Station that has been the subject of re-development proposals.
National Theatre	Founder member of SBEG, the NT consists of 3 theatres on the South Bank, dedicated to reflecting and expanding British theatre. The theatre building, designed by Denys Lasdun, was opened in 1976.
Shell	A founder member of SBEG, Shell's international headquarters, Shell Centre, was opened in 1963 on a 7.5 acre site adjacent to Jubilee Gardens and currently house around 4000 staff. Andrew Eddy, a Director of Shell UK, served as SBEG Chair from 2002-2009.
Southbank Centre	A founder member of SBEG, the SBC is an arts-based complex with charitable status, founded by the LCC in 1951. It consists of the Royal Festival Hall, the Hayward Gallery, Queen Elizabeth Hall, and Purcell Room, all located on the riverside walk. SBC's estate also includes Jubilee Gardens and the Hungerford car park.

Appendix 12. South Bank Employer's Group: Milestones timeline

1991: London Weekend Television, Coin Street Community Builders, Shell, the National Theatre, Sainsbury's and a handful of others begin to meet to discuss environmental problems on the South Bank and explore solutions. The group assume the name South Bank Employers' Group (SBEG).

1992: SBEG commission Ove Arup to study traffic and pedestrian problems in and around the South Bank.

1993: SBEG commission the consultants Llewelyn-Davies and Imagination to prepare an urban design strategy for an area between Westminster and Blackfriars Bridges, lying to the south of the River Thames, the area that forms the focus of SBEG members' concerns.

1994: SBEG become an incorporated body on 6 October 1994. The urban design strategy is released for consultation in April 1994 under the name of the 'South Bank Environmental Improvement Report'. The report proposes 5 general principles and a 'menu' of 30 costed projects. The report is well received and leads to the formation of a residents' Forum (the South Bank Forum), and the South Bank Partnership (SBP) who begin to hold meetings. The SBP is chaired by the two local MPs, and involves Lambeth and Southwark Councillors, representatives from Lambeth and Southwark Councils alongside SBEG members. Ian Coull, Director of Sainsbury's, becomes SBEG's Chairman.

1995: SBEG appoint their first Chief Executive, Camilla Cavendish, now a journalist for The Times newspaper. SBEG is formed as a company limited by guarantee with 15 members. Successful bid for SRB Round 1 funds to implement the first parts of the urban design strategy.

1996: Waterloo Place Final Design Report published with agreement of all land owners and transport operators. Private funds are raised for repairs to the 'Spine Route'. Work begins on Spine Route improvements including CCTV and new signage. First meeting of the South Bank Traders' Association.

1997: SBEG, in partnership with the Cross-River Partnership, and Lambeth and Southwark Councils, publish a consultation document, the 'South Bank Riverside Walkway and Landscape Strategy' led by architects Liftschutz Davidson. The strategy is funded by the Government Office for London (GOL) and Lambeth and Southwark Councils, and recommends a strategy and specific costed proposals to transform the South Bank's riverside walkway. The final landscape design report is published in August 1997. Spine Route Improvements, part of the 1994 Urban Design Strategy, are opened by the Prime Minister, Tony Blair, in July 1997. 'Wire Walk' launches Thames Festival with worldwide media coverage.

1998: The Spine Route Improvements win the London Tourist Board Tourism and Environment Award.

1999: SBEG commission a review of the 1994 Urban Design Strategy, led by architects Liftschutz Davidson. Technical audit of CCTV provision is completed. Concept for lighting the area between Waterloo and Blackfriar's Bridge is completed. Design competition for Bernie Spain Gardens (Coin Street) play area is held. £1 million is awarded to SBEG by the Arts Council Lottery Fund for further improvements to the Spine Route including public art. A

new set of South Bank banners are commissioned. Publication of South Bank Map and Guide. 'Explore the Millennium Mile Campaign', encouraging visitors and Londoner's to explore the area runs. A MORI survey assessing local resident, employer and employee's needs is published. Work begins on a social and community programme funded by the SRB. The 'Supporting Local Schools' programme is launched. A route for the Eco-Bus project, a demonstration project for environmentally sustainable and integrated transport in partnership with Lambeth, Southwark, Tower Hamlets, Westminster and the City, is agreed in principle, and London Transports agrees to tender the service.

2000: A draft of the revised Urban Design Strategy is released for consultation. A 3 year contract with South Bank Management Services is agreed in July 2000 to ensure the day to day management and maintenance of the area. At a meeting to discuss WPB's SRB application, 'Opportunity into Reality: A New Waterloo' in May 2000, it is proposed that SBEG's Chairman should assume the role of WPB Chair, and the SBP will oversee the allocation of funds. First Bus is appointed as the operator of the Eco-Bus service. Improvement on the riverside walk continues, old street furniture is removed, and new litter bins, street signage and event structures are installed in the area between Westminster and Lambeth Bridges. The upgrading of riverside walkway surfaces between IBM to the Oxo Tower begins. Improvements to Bernie Spain Gardens are carried out. A report evaluating the impact of recent developments and improvements in the area is commissioned with the aim of informing a programme of future improvements. The design, supply and installation of a CCTV system along the riverside walk began. Steps to tackle illegal trading on the riverside walk are taken in partnership with the London Borough of Lambeth.

2001: Following the award of £19 million of SRB funds to the WPB, SBEG become the delivery agent for the WPB's programme, which begins in 2001. Discussions between Lambeth and SBEG about establishing a formal contract regarding long-term strategic management and maintenance strategies for the area continue. Work begins on the 'Walk This Way' campaign to encourage Londoners to explore the architectural history of the river. The project is supported by the Cross River Partnership. Work commences on developing the South Bank website which brings together information on he venues and events in the area. The South Bank news is re-launched, and a South Bank London leaflet is developed. A study of proposed facilities to support the local community is commissioned. The installation of a digital CCTV system alongside the riverside walkway is completed. SBEG begin considering the possibility of becoming a Business Improvement District (BID) for the area, prior to enabling legislation which is anticipated in 2004. A back-lit glass image wall and a large free-standing mirror monolith are installed at Sutton Walk, one of the main routes between the South Bank and Waterloo Station in November 2001. The works, funded by the Arts Council, were carried out by artist Alberto Duman and architects MacCormac Jamieson Pritchard. The 'Supporting Local Schools Programme' continues, the project aims to help schools raise standards and develop effective relationships with businesses and the wider community, opening up opportunities for employment. Greenwich Leisure are commissioned to investigate the viability of a swimming pool and leisure facility on Doon Street. The North Lambeth and North Southwark Sport Action Zone is set up as part of a national initiative by Sport England, SBEG are a board member and applied to become the host agent, that will see SBEG provide the partnership framework in which the SAZ will operate, and will provide administrative support. Waterloo Community Regeneration Trust (WCRT) is established to act as a voice for the local community within local regeneration. Due to major expansion during 2001, SBEG move into new offices at 103

Waterloo Road in December 2001. The offices are shared with other key partners, including WPB, WCRT, SBP, SAZ, and Circle Waterloo.

2002: SBEG become the delivery agent for the SAZ. A new Urban Design Strategy (UDS) is launched in January 2002. The strategy recognises the effect that the open of new public attractions has had upon the area, and calls for an urgent resolution to the management and maintenance of the public realm. The UDS was influenced by, and reflects the Transport, Visitor Management and Public Realm strategy, which arose out of a conference on public realm issues held in July 2001, attended by Lambeth and Southwark, the WPB, LDA and other business and community representatives. The Streetscapes Feasibility Project, funded by SBEG and WPB, and led by consultants, takes forward the Transport, Visitor Management and Public Realm strategy. Working in partnership with local authorities and community groups, it aims to deliver improved streetscapes across the wider SBP area. The RVI (Eco-Bus) bus service begins. The Mayor of London launches the completed riverside walkway improvements to the area between IBM and Oxo Tower wharf. Talks begin with Lambeth and Southwark promoting the adoption of a report based on the Streetscapes Feasibility Project as Supplementary Planning Guidance. Andrew Eddy, a Director of Shell, becomes SBEG Chairman.

2003: SBEG negotiate a further 3 year term for the delivery of management and maintenance contract work to July 2006. Two street sweeping machines, managed by Lambeth and CSCB, are launched. SBEG commission Partnership Solutions to consider BID sustainability, commercial viability and long term planning in waterloo and the South Bank. SBEG members convene a steering group of interested stakeholders to build a consensus about how to deliver the Jubilee Gardens improvements. SBEG become the host agent for the SE1 United project, a youth forum funded by the WCRT.

2004: The current Chief Executive, Ted Inman, joins the organisation as a full time CE in June 2004. The 'South Bank Streetscapes Design Guide', based on work carried out in the Streetscapes Feasibility Project is published in January 2004. The Guide outlines how street clutter can be removed, along with suggested security, accessibility and street management arrangements. The Visitor Management Group (VGM) is re-formed as a sub-group of SBEG and chaired by Lambeth, after a break in 2003. The Streetscapes Design Guide is adopted by Lambeth and Southwark Councils as Supplementary Planning Guidance, and several public realm projects in the Guide are delivered. Work began on temporary resurfacing of Jubilee Gardens funded by the London Eye's Section 106. A e-newsletter service publicising South Bank arts and entertainment. SBEG join the Comprehensive Ladder of Progression programme, a Learning and Skills Council and European Social Fund initiative that aims to improve employment and learning prospects of local people through partnership working with employers and other stakeholders.

2006: South Bank Partnership publish 'Under Pressure and on the Edge, London's South Bank: A Manifesto for Action' which calls for coordinated action to secure the South Bank's sustainable future. SRB programmes begin to close. The BID model is rejected by SBEG board members, who opt to remain a voluntary membership organisation.

2007: The WPB's 'Opportunity into Reality: A New Waterloo' SRB programme ends in March 2007. SBP will take forward the WPB's work.

2008: SBEG launch a competition to appoint a design team for Waterloo City Square. Street clutter is removed and public art banners are installed on Waterloo Road. Work

begins on Kings' Plaza, improvements to the public realm in front of King's College London. Designs created for Thames Festival's Rivers of the World project are installed along Upper Ground and Concert Hall approach. SBEG begin work with Southbank Centre to identify a potential site and operator for public toilets. Improvements are completed on the Sutton Walk and Belvedere railway arches as part of the 'Light at the End of the Tunnel' programme. The first feasibility stage of a major Decentralised Energy project designed to reduce the South Bank's carbon footprint is completed. SBEG are selected by Lambeth to coordinate its Neighbourhood Working programme in Waterloo, one of three 'model areas' alongside Brixton and Clapham Park, which commit the borough to a neighbourhood-led approach to service delivery. The South Bank Graffiti Removal Service removes the 6000th graffiti tag. SBEG convene a multi agency panel to engage with local landowners to address rough sleeping behind Waterloo International Terminal. The South Bank Patrol Service launches, working 7 days a week, 11am – 11pm. Illegal street-trading on and around the Riverside Walk is eliminated. South Bank Business Watch is restructured and membership is increased to 32 organisations. SBEG work with the Police and Lambeth council to reduce incidents of anti-social behaviour and street drinking.

2009: Second MORI poll of residents, employees, and visitors is published. David Sharpe, Divisional Director of Merlin Entertainment Group, the owners of the London Eye, becomes SBEG Chairman.

Appendix 13. Expenditure breakdown, SRB round 6, Waterloo: Opportunity into Reality

Waterloo Community Regeneration Trust		
Strengthening and developing voluntary and community organisations [inc Community Chest]	£1,682, 725	38%
Core costs	£815, 373	18%
Tackling barriers to employment	£704,355	16%
Improving the environment	£677, 247	15%
Investing in community facilities	£521,372	12%
Contingency	£22,876	1%
Total lifetime spend	£4,428,950	

Waterloo Project Board		
Ensuring sustainability and community benefit	£7, 692, 578 [of of which £4, 428,950 to fund WCRT]	40%
Promoting lifelong learning	£5,015,967	26%
Improving the physical environment	£4,097,026	21%
Core costs	£1,446,152	8%
New jobs and businesses	£884, 010	5%
Total lifetime spend	£19, 135,733	

Name of organisation	Lambeth First (LF)	Government Office for London (GOL)	Cross River Partnership (CRP)	Central London Partnership/Central London Forward	Blackfriars Settlement (BS)	Association of Waterloo Groups (AWG)
Sector	Multi-sector partnership	Public sector	Multi-sector partnership	Public sector	Voluntary/community	Voluntary/community
Membership	Lambeth Voluntary Action Council, Lambeth PCT, Lambeth College, Lambeth Community Empowerment Network, Family Housing Assoc., Leaseholders Council, LB of Lambeth, SBEG, Lambeth Tenants Assoc.		Better Bankside (BID), Business Link for London, City of London, Groundwork London.	Representatives from central London boroughs, GLA, London Business Board.	-	Tenants/Residents Assocs., Housing co-ops, Local sport groups/ community centres, Friends of Archbishop's Park/Friends of Jubilee Gardens, Waterloo Action Centre, Waterloo Community Dev. Group, Waterloo Green Trust, Waterloo Legal Advice Service, Young Vic Theatre, Church groups.
Description/role	Lambeth's LSP, formed of local residents, businesses, public, private & voluntary sectors to facilitate more effective service delivery. Long-term vision: improving quality of life for people in Lambeth.	Joins up the work of 10 Central Govt. Depts across London to ensure that Londoners benefit from all the help which is available from central government.	Formed 1995, aims to link prosperity in central London to deprived areas & make the river less of a physical /social barrier. Projects include: bridges/ transport routes, economic progs.	Sub-regional strategic organisation representing 7 central London authorities (Camden, Islington, City of Westminster, City of London, Lambeth, Southwark, Royal Borough of Kensington) & Chelsea)	Educational charity founded in 1887 by women from Oxford and Cambridge Universities	Formally established as a neighbourhood council in 1974 and recognised as a neighbourhood council, today AWG is an umbrella group for local community organisations.

Name of organisation	Waterloo Quarter Business Alliance (WQBA)	Waterloo Community Dev. Group (WCDG)	Waterloo Community Coalition (WaCoCo)	South Bank Partnership (SBP)	Southwark Alliance (SA)
Sector	Private sector	Community	Voluntary/Community	Multi-sector partnership	Multi-sector partnership
Membership	All business ratepayers within the BID area	Open to all permanent residents of the Waterloo area.	AWG, Bankside Open Spaces Trust, BS, Tenant Assocs/Housing co-ops, Church groups, Friends of Archbishops Park/JGs, Schools, Morley College, Sports/arts/ youth groups, WAC, WCDG, Waterloo Open Spaces Pship., Waterloo Parents Providers Forum, Waterloo Time Bank, Welcare Faith in Regen.	Kate Hoey MP Vauxhall, Simon Hughes, MP North Southwark & Bermondsey, London Assembly, LBs of Lambeth/Southwark, Bishops & Cathedral ward councillors, SBEG, CRP, GOL, GLA, LDA, Met Police, TFL, Learning & Skills Council.	Southwark Council, Southwark PCT, Safer Southwark /Young Southwark Pships., Job Centre Plus, Better Bankside, Family Mosaic, Community Action Southwark, LSBU, Southwark Voice, Head Teachers' Exec.
Description/role	BID operating to the south east of Waterloo station.	Community land planning group formed 1972, offers support on planning/development issues. Part-funded by Lambeth Council.	Community organisation set up to continue the WCRT's work following the end of SRB 6 funding	Acts as a forum to discuss projects within local area & for informal agreements on strategic investment decision/ forward planning.	Southwark's LSP, exists to make Southwark a better place to live, to learn, to work, to have fun in.

Source: Author's own

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